

PASTORAL PREMARITAL COUNSELING IN TAIWAN:
AN EVALUATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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By
Kao-Fang Yeh
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Kao-Fang Yeh

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Howard Chubbell

Jane D. Douglas

March 18, 1977
Date

Joseph C. Vaughn, Jr.
Dean

TO MY WIFE
and
TO OUR BELOVED SON

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ABSTRACT

During the past few years, the experience of social change in Taiwan has been rapid, radical, and far-sweeping. Today, many aspects of married life are being re-evaluated, re-defined, and some times re-shaped by Chinese young people. However, the full impact of recent social change on young people's attitudes and expectations regarding the marital relationship is not yet known.

The theme of this study is based on these questions: "What is the new pattern of marital relationship as perceived by Chinese young adults?" and "What needs to be done to make marriage more creative amid social change?" In answering these questions the author first conducted a survey of Current Attitudes Concerning Factors For A Creative Marriage Relationship among a selected sample of young adults in Taiwan. The implications of the survey findings have enhanced a new understanding of young people's attitudes toward the marriage relationship, and revealed the urgent need of premarital counseling in the churches of Taiwan.

The author is aware of the significance of social and cultural involvements in premarital counseling. What is effective in one culture is not necessarily so in other cultures. For this concern, the author has examined and evaluated the cultural barriers and practical difficulties as well as the opportunities for premarital counseling in

Taiwanese churches. In proposing an effective premarital counseling program for use in Taiwan, the author has taken those barriers, difficulties, and opportunities into careful consideration. Therefore, the content of the program relevant to the needs of Chinese young adults and the counseling approach applicable to the local situation are emphasized in this study.

Pastoral premarital counseling is not a set of techniques to be used in isolation from Christian belief or from the counselor's vocation as a Christian pastor. Hence before presenting a premarital counseling program the author has explored some basic theological assumptions regarding the nature and the purpose of Christian marriage and how to make it creative. Furthermore, in suggesting some practical methods to promote a premarital counseling program in Taiwan, the author is concerned that the program be based on theological and pastoral perspectives.

This study has significantly pointed out some directions in which current Chinese youth culture and youth ministry may be moving and focusing. A study of premarital counseling is deemed significant especially in that throughout the entire history of the Chinese church in Taiwan there has not been such a program specifically designated or recommended for use by the pastors.

INTRODUCTION

A. THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE MARRIAGE-FAMILY SYSTEM

The Chinese people have long believed that the family system is the most important foundation of the social structure. It has often been said that the family system is the foundational stone of Chinese culture.

The traditional Chinese family pattern is the joint or extended family system. Often the joint family consists of three or four generations. All of these people live in a common house, or in several households connected together, or in a cluster of houses in a village. There are strong family ties in family life that cause the Chinese to cling together in the family, both in feelings and activities. Through these family ties the family has developed a kind of loyalty among its members which is not usually found in the West.

These strong family ties are rooted in a particular kind of cultural pattern. Basically, the close family ties are generated under a strong patriarchal family system. It is patriarchalism that has shaped the culture and civilization of the country. The patriarchalism is male-dominated and authoritarian in nature. The male ruler is usually the oldest man in the family. Since everyone has to conform to the male ruler's authority, the family maintains inner unity and harmony. Thus, the male issue is the most important

aspect of the patriarchal system. The need for a male son is very urgent.

In traditional Chinese families male sons are the symbol of family succession. No family is complete without a male son. Until a woman bears a male child she is only a provisional member of her husband's household, merely a daughter-in-law. With the birth of a son, she becomes the mother of one of its descendants, and thus earns a position of prestige and respect. A birth of the first male child is a matter of great joy in the Chinese family. If the birth of the first male child is a matter of rejoicing for the child's parents, it is even more of an eventful day in the lives of the child's paternal grandparents. The joy of every elderly Chinese is to spend his/her declining years in the company of his/her grandchildren. It is a matter of great pride for a man to know that he has grandsons as well as sons. They are tangible proof that his line of descent will continue, that the ancestor worship will always be carried on.

Perhaps another well known trait of Chinese family life is ancestor worship. The ancestors are thought of as actual members of the present family, except that they live in the other world. Because ancestors belong to the "elder set" they are highly respected and revered. The ancestors are not to be forgotten; they must always be remembered. Therefore, the traditional rite of ancestor worship must be

held regularly. There is a particular day each year on which all members of the family will gather together to participate in the rite of worship of the ancestors. Revering one's ancestors from one generation to another without ceasing is a very important part of Chinese family tradition. That is why it is the duty of a son to see that another generation is born to carry on the obligations to the ancestors after his death.

For about two thousands years Confucius has given China a stable culture which is based mainly on stable family life. The teachings of Confucius are a set of ethical principles for daily living more than a religion. They have greatly molded the Chinese culture. One cannot think of the Chinese way of life without Confucianism. It set up rules for various relationships, particularly those within the family. In short, its essential goal is complete harmony in relationships and so strictly guards virtues. It is stated in Confucius' *Analects* that, "Filial piety is the root of all virtues; nothing is greater than filial piety."¹ There is nothing more abominable, according to Confucius, than an unfilial son who abandons his parents and leaves his ancestors. For this reason family ties are strong and the patriarchal system and ancestor worship have flourished.

Within this cultural background mentioned before,

¹Confucius, The Analects (Taipei: Chufa, 1949), p.7.

the traditional old-young relationship is based on the authority and dominance of parents and grandparents (particularly the males) and the unquestioning obedience and submission of the younger generation. Respect from the younger generation is demanded in order to assure family harmony and solidarity. The young must obey their parents. If they do not the whole extended family and the community will condemn them. In the traditional family the obedience of children manifests itself in obligations. Parents demand that the children take good care of them when they are aged. The parents regard the children as their security in their old age. This is one reason why many children are preferred to few.

Marriage in such a traditional family system is compulsory and is completely in the hands of parents. The parents are morally obliged to find mates for their children. Parents are supposed to know what is good for their children and seek to arrange marriages with those of similar social status. Hence both sons and daughters are expected to accept the parental choice. In such a tradition, it is not surprising that some couples do not see each other until the wedding is performed.

Apparently, the traditional marriage under the parental arrangement is not a personal choice but a necessity imposed upon individuals by the culture. What is considered important in marriage is not the desires of the parties,

but what is good for families. Marriage is conceived of as between two families, not between two spouses.

Furthermore, traditionally, marriage is not recognized as bringing a separate and independent entity. When a son marries he takes the wife into the home of his father. The son continues to be under the direct authority of his father or parents. Naturally, parental authority also extends to the newly arrived bride who becomes a member of the husband's family. The husband and his wife continue in his former status and they are as children of the original family.

In the traditional family system where the male plays a dominant role, the wife is under the "legal guardianship" of the husband. For a woman, in her childhood and youth she is dependent on her father; in adulthood she is dependent on her husband; in her old age or upon the death of her husband, on her sons. Her happiness is in the happiness of the husband and the children. She has little freedom and contact with the world beyond the family.

In the wedding ceremony both bride and the groom vow to conform to the moral demands of married life, namely, faithfulness, obedience, and service. However, usually, it is only the wife who is bound to practice these duties. According to custom, the husband never goes into the kitchen, for work there belongs entirely to the wife. Her main task is to serve for therein lies a woman's virtue. The wife is

expected to be chaste, while a double standard of morality is permissible for husbands. However, the wife is rarely divorced or expelled from the family when the subsidiary wife(concubine) is brought in. If the wife fulfills her expected role, she is assured life status and care.

B. THE CHINESE MARRIAGE-FAMILY AMID RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE

The experience of social change is now a universal phenomenon. However, it is important to realize that whereas the change within Western society has been gradual, the change in Eastern society has been rapid, radical, and far-sweeping. In short, this tremendous change in the East is due to several main factors. They are:

1. the open and growing contacts with the West;
2. the spread of new ideas and ideals through mass media communication;
3. the process of modernization, including urbanization and industrialization; and
4. the new freedom gained by individuals.

During the past few years, consultations and conferences have been held by secular as well as religious organizations in Taiwan. All of them have consistently pointed out that by the impact of new social factors the old static and unchanging Taiwan has become dynamic and fast changing. Today, change is a major characteristic of our society. It takes place everywhere and at all times,

whether it is noticed or not. But the pace of change varies depending upon the conditions and circumstances at work in the society. Usually, the nearer a community is to new environmental factors or catalyzing forces the larger and faster is the change. It can be illustrated by noting the changes in cities, big towns, and their suburbs. Under such conditions, today, several cities in Taiwan such as Taipei and Kaohsiung are comparable to the most modern cities in the West.

Under the tremendous social changes which have taken place lately, the first to be affected is the marriage-family system. It is reported that industrialization, coupled with Westernization, is the major cause of the breakdown of the traditional Chinese family system.²

The cohesive system of joint families is challenged by the movement and development of nuclear families in our changing society. To Western eyes, the clan system appears to have "more or less completely disappeared... and the single system of the West is taking its place."³ We are now in the stage of transition from the extended to the

²F. M. Wong, "Industrialization and Family Structure in Hong Kong," Journal of Marriage and Family, XXXVII: 4 (November 1975), 985.

³G. P. Charles, "Family Life in Changing East Asia," in R. B. Maniham (ed.) The Christian Family in Changing East Asia (Manila: Federation of Christian Churches, 1954), p. 25.

nuclear family pattern. Some of the consequences brought about by the transition are individualism and equalitarianism. Both are major guiding principles in the new society in Taiwan and have brought about many changes in marriage-family life as well as personal life.

As young people move to the city and gain a higher education and better vocation, they loosen their ties with the extended family. The solid family ties are disintegrating. Children are not as completely obedient to their parents as in former days. The importance of the parental role is greatly diminished and the children grow in their independence and freedom. The elders who are used to rigorous discipline and obedience cannot appreciate the new demands of youth for freedom. The increase of individual freedom challenges the authoritarian family.

Naturally, when younger people have gained freedom, a new emphasis on individualism is appearing. Persons who formerly gave their primary loyalty to the family and merged their desires and goals in it are now pursuing individual purposes. They are asserting their individual rights to select their own destiny. They demand the right to choose their own vocation, their own mate, and to make their own decisions which in the old culture were automatically made by parents.

Under the speedy impact of social change, values once generally accepted are being set aside. There are

definite and numerous changes in the attitudes of young adults toward sex roles and marriage relationship in Taiwan as compared with traditional attitudes of earlier years. Apparently, such changes in the male-female relationship have greatly influenced the marital relationship.

Generally speaking, the traditional concept of man as a superior being and woman as an inferior one is increasingly fading in Taiwan. The traditional conventions concerning the relationships between men and women are now considered old-fashioned. This does not mean that men and women are equal in all respects in Taiwan, but women are emerging as co-partners of men in business, in homes, churches, and society. The relationship between sexes has improved and women are given more rights today. Young women like young men can make their own choices of the careers they will pursue and the mates they will marry.

In married life the wife's role has been changed from a purely passive to a more active one. The submissive and fertile wife comes to be less and less appreciated. The wife who was submissive in sexual life is being emancipated. Mutual interdependency is required between the spouses, instead of the husband's dependency on the parents and the wife's dependency on the children.

Basically, many changes in marriage and male-female relationships have resulted from the consciousness-raising of recent young people. Indeed, a number of young people

(especially young women) have been raising their consciousness and asking for further changes. It is predictable that the voice of demanding new and more human relationships between the sexes in Taiwan will and should be getting much louder and affecting wider areas.

C. MOTIVATION OF THIS STUDY

The role of the marriage-family system as a foundational stone for Chinese culture has diminished. The transitions in marriage-family life which are now taking place in Taiwan have brought complications to marital and familial problems. Many people cannot adjust themselves to the changing environment and this results in more complicated marriage and family problems.

A commonly cited indicator of such problems is the increasing divorce rate in Taiwan. According to the Census report of 1975, the divorce rate in Taiwan has risen from 2.1 per 100 marriages in 1964 to 5.7 in 1974.⁴ It has been pointed out that the rise in the divorce rate is correspondingly accompanied by other rapid social changes. One of these is the transition in the institution of marriage.⁵

⁴Ministry of Interior, Taiwan Demographic Fact Book 1974 (Taipei: September, 1975), p. 73.

⁵Edward A. Westmarck, The Future of Marriage in Western Civilization (New York: Books for Libraries, 1970), p. 152.

Unavoidably, the churches of Taiwan in such a situation are faced with various new marriage and family problems. It has been reported by the East Asian Council of Churches that:⁶

The churches are increasingly having to deal with new problems. Many Christian young people claiming the right of free choice, are marrying non-Christian partners. Cases of unchastity and marital infidelity are appearing among church members. Increasing report to divorce in the non-Christian community is having a disturbing effect on Christian marriages. Ignorance about personality development is creating tensions between Christian parents and their adolescent children.

Having served as a professional counselor, the author has had the opportunity of coming to know and understanding the real situation of marriage in Taiwan. It is the author's observation that many aspects of married life are being questioned by the Chinese young people. This includes all aspects from the basic definition to the extended functions. For them marriage is in the process of being re-evaluated, re-defined, and perhaps even re-shaped.

Lately, there have been discussions in the churches regarding the reputed changes in the life of marriage. However, our churches seem to lack an extensive and formal study or research on the exact nature and the extent of the changes in marriage. The only available report on the

⁶East Asian Council of Churches, The Christian Family in East Asia (New York: International Missionary Council, 1958), p. 22.

subject is a simple survey of Attitudes of Christian College Students Toward Marriage which was conducted by the Taipei Y.M.C.A. in 1964. The content of this survey was very limited and its findings are out of date.

Changes taking place in marriage-family system in Taiwan require fresh investigation from a Christian perspective. To interpret these changes and problems in such a way as to understand how the church can be more helpful to marriages and families is important. However, the full impact of recent social change on young people's attitudes and expectations regarding the marriage relationship is not yet known. As a pastoral counselor who is dealing with complicated marriage problems, the author needs to be continuously aware of recent marital attitudes of the people with whom the author is working. It is with these concerns in mind that the author has conducted this study.

The themes of this study are based on questions such as: "What is the new pattern of a marriage relationship perceived by Chinese young adults?" and "What needs to be done to make marriage more creative amid social change?" In answering these questions the author's first attempt was to obtain descriptive data with which to enhance the new understanding of the recent marriage relationship. Such understanding is necessarily prior to shaping the Christian ministry to the modern marriage and family in our churches. This new understanding will suggest a new frontier for

pastoral premarital counseling when working with the young people described.

A study of premarital counseling is deemed especially significant in that throughout the entire history of the Chinese church in Taiwan there has been no specifically designated or even recommended premarital counseling program for use by its pastors.

PART ONE

A SURVEY STUDY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD
MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP AMONG YOUNG ADULTS
IN TAIWAN

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY OF THE SURVEY

A. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Almost all of the words and phrases in this project are well known through common usage, and it is assumed that in most cases further elaboration is unnecessary. However, for absolute clarity some remarks should be made about some of the terms which are used and the meaning they have in this study.

1. Young Adults:

For the purpose of this study, "young adults" is defined as Chinese Christians whose ages are from 20 to 30. They are divided into three age groups: 20-22; 23-26; and 27-30. They are baptized Christians but do not necessarily attend church programs regularly.

2. Marriage Relationship:

Marriage is defined for the purpose of this study as a relationship between one man and one woman, each with a unique personality, who have chosen to live together. They have fulfilled certain social requirements and are considered legally married. Scripturally, the sex roles in marriage are defined as heterosexual. Therefore, a marriage

relationship involves two heterosexual adults who are legally married and living together. Two other types of sexual behavior, homosexuality and bisexuality, are not included.

3. Creative Marriage:

A "creative marriage" is defined as a happy, rewarding, satisfying, and successful experience which married people eagerly seek. Creative marriages need not be problem free.

There is cynicism about marriage in today's world. In the United States, the percentage of persons between the ages of 25 and 54 who had been married and divorced and not remarried jumped from 7 to 10 per thousand population in the past five years.¹ However, most people get divorced, not because they do not like marriage, but to find a better marriage partner. Marriage is still regarded as the central fact of our lives. The results of an American national opinion survey show that of the 3000 women polled, 96 percent still view marriage as their first choice for the most satisfying and interesting way of life.² What is changing is the kind of marriage to which those women look forward.

¹Charlotte H. Clinebell, Counseling for Liberation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 47.

²Ibid., p. 46.

Chinese people seem to have a common view that regards marriage as the natural course of life. In general, every mature-healthy man and woman is expected to get married and have a family. Marriage is not a dying institution. It is a changing one. The author has great faith and hope in the fact that God meant marriage to be a deeply creative experience.

4. Premarital Counseling:

Recently, different models of premarital counseling have been developed in the churches. The definition of premarital counseling in this study is only one of the types which is broadly practiced particularly in the American churches.

This word "premarital," when used in the context of premarital counseling, is understood to refer to that period of time beginning when the newly engaged couple first make contact with a pastor (or, in many cases the initiative may lie with the pastor), to discuss plans for a Christian marriage. The point involved in this definition is that premarital counseling includes one or a group of engaged couples who meet with a specific pastor prior to a designated wedding date. When a minister is able and a couple is interested in pursuing such a task, this is properly called "premarital counseling." If a minister does not feel qualified or ready for such an activity, and if a couple

makes it clear that they have no desire to engage in such an effort, then premarital counseling could not proceed.

In the light of the above definition, premarital counseling correctly excludes church programs or sermons on such topics as "Courtship and Dating," "Sex Education," "Marriage and Family," etc. Because such presentations would necessarily be general in nature, and even though presented prior to marriage, they would not be designed for the benefit of a specific couple. Such programs and sermons probably are valuable for premarital education, and they should be included in the church's regular projects.

Therefore, when the phrase "premarital counseling" is used in this study it does not refer to the single (that is, unengaged) state of people in general, or even groups of single people who participate in premarital education programs.

B. FOCI OF THE SURVEY

The author originally thought that the findings of this survey would reveal the respondents' own realization of the degree of necessity of specific factors for a creative marriage. It would also reveal the respondents' degree of expectation from marriage relationship (or, specifically from one's partner) concerning these factors. This survey, therefore, focused on the following questions and purposes.

First, the major focus of the survey is to learn

the factors that young adult Christians consider as highly necessary for a creative marriage relationship. Therefore, the primary focus is to identify and critically assess the current view of a creative marriage relationship among the respondents. Furthermore, if there are major changes occurring in the norms and values of men and women as a result of the women's rights movement, the research is interested in knowing what, if any, major effects it has had on the attitudes among men and women.

Second, since the recognized presence of rapid social change in Taiwan is a major motivation for conducting this study, the author would like to examine the findings in view of any significant differences of the data between the Taipei YMCA's survey in 1964 and the author's recent one. The presupposition is that there would be significant differences between these two findings.

Third, the author is deeply concerned with reflecting upon the results of the survey in order to sharpen the understanding of young adults and from which to garner suggestions related to an effective ministry for young people in Taiwan. Thus, in analyzing the findings, the author must look for significant implications to evaluate the importance of marriage preparation. Other implications for the roles of marriage counselors and pastors as well as church programs would also be carefully examined.

C. THE SURVEY DESIGN

1. The Instrument:

Primary means for gathering the data for this study is a three-part questionnaire (see Appendix). Part I provides a demographic profile of the questionnaire population. Part II is designed to identify those factors which are considered by persons responding as highly necessary for a creative marriage relationship. Part III raises several questions to assist in the evaluation of the roles of pastors and the church in providing premarital counseling. In view of the desired sample size and the limited time in which to collect the data, the form of the questionnaire was designed for manageability.

2. Selecting The Factors:

Since an ideal marriage is a creative living relationship, it must be fostered and sustained. Several important factors must be considered within the context of a creative marriage relationship. For this study, twenty-five relationship factors are tested. These factors were selected in part from the author's readings on the subject of marital relationship. Some of the factors were selected from the author's practical experience in marriage and family counseling. They are formulated on the basis of

possible changes from traditional Chinese values to modern views on marriage.

According to the content of these twenty-five factors, they can be divided into six components to cover comprehensively the meaning and facts of married life. The six components are divided as follows:

(1) Characteristics of the Partner:

Financial Security; Good Health;
Good Character; Sense of Humor;
Handsome or Beauty.

(2) Similarities of the Partner:

Similar Religion; Similar Race;
Participating in a Church;
Similar Social Class.

(3) Parent-Child Relationship:

To Have Children; Live with Parents;
Congenial Parent-Child Relationship;
Choose Your Own Mate.

(4) Sex:

Premarital Chastity;
Sexual Compatibility;
Sexual Loyalty.

(5) Roles of Husband and Wife:

Equality; Cooperation;
Individuality.

(6) Interaction Between Husband and Wife:

Trust for Each Other; Open Communication;
Love for Each Other; Mutual Interests;
Mutual Understanding; Mutual Adjustment.

In order to distinguish the nature of these twenty-five factors, they can also be classified in three major categories. That is, an Internal Category (including Good Character, Good Health, etc.); an External Category (including Financial Security, Similar Race, etc.); and an Interpersonal Category (including Mutual Adjustment, Open Communication, etc.).

3. Scaling:

Since this is a research survey, the first and major level of analysis is descriptive. A six-point scale of necessity of the factors for a creative marriage relationship is used. The respondents are asked to rank each relationship factor as:

<u>1</u> Very Necessary;	<u>2</u> Highly Necessary;
<u>3</u> Fairly Necessary;	<u>4</u> Fairly Unnecessary;
<u>5</u> Not Very Necessary;	<u>6</u> Very Unnecessary.

The author is aware of the survey is focused on the question: What are the factors that young adults presently consider as highly necessary for a creative marriage relationship? Therefore, in reporting the findings only 1 and 2 scales are included in the compressed form of the tables in the following chapter.

4. Administration of the Survey:

The original form of the questionnaire was revised after consulting with the author's Professional Project Committee. This revised form was then pretested with twenty-eight Chinese-American young adults of the Evangelical Formosan Church in Los Angeles prior to its administration to the final sample. After examining the result of the pre-test, it was confirmed as workable. The questionnaire was translated into Chinese in order to obtain information from Chinese young adults in Taiwan.

The sample was formed by asking the author's colleagues in Taiwan to choose the respondents who met the following shared characteristics:

- (1) Christian;
- (2) Between 20 to 30 years of age;
- (3) Residing in Taipei metropolitan area; and
- (4) College student or college graduate.

The surveyor was given a copy of the questionnaire and a cassette tape containing instructions to assist in conducting the survey. The sample was obtained simply on the basis of availability. However, the surveyor was instructed to consider the quota system, that is to have a balanced distribution of the respondents' sex, age, marital status, and educational level. Furthermore, in accord with the basic principle in a survey research, the researcher

does not percentage anything with a sample smaller than twenty-five respondents.³ The surveyor was also instructed to seek not less than twenty-five respondents in each category of the variables (sex, age, etc.).

Ten choirs and youth groups of six Presbyterian churches in Taipei were selected by the surveyor. A total of one hundred forty-five respondents who met the above common characteristics compose the sample.

³Marcia S. Aron, *Field Projects for Sociology Students* (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1970), p. 46.

CHAPTER II

THE SURVEY FINDINGS

The object of this chapter is to obtain descriptive data to provide informed understanding and evaluation as a foundation for the church's premarital counseling programs. Different tables are used to present the significant data.

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

The sample consists of 145 respondents. Its demographic distribution is presented in Table 1. As it indicates the sample is almost evenly distributed between male and female: 69 respondents or 47.6 percent are male and 76 respondents or 52.4 percent are female. Almost 100 respondents are single and only 46 respondents or 31.7 percent are married. In terms of educational level, 84 respondents or 57.9 percent are college students, and 61 respondents or 42.1 percent have graduated from colleges. There are 70 respondents or 47.9 percent of the total sample in the 20-22 age group, and 56 respondents or 38.6 percent in the 27-30 age group. However, there are only 19 respondents or 13.5 percent in the 23-26 age group. The author's explanation as to the rather unbalanced distribution of the respondents among the age groups is that Chinese males are required to serve the R.O.T.C. (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) for at least two years right after their graduation

from college. Thus, there are comparatively fewer of the age group between 23-26 in the churches. It is understandable that the surveyor had difficulty in asking more young adults who are 23-26 years old to respond.

(Table 1)
DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION
OF THE 145 RESPONDENTS

Variables	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
<u>Sex:</u> Male	69	47.6
Female	76	52.4
<u>Age:</u> 20-22	70	47.9
23-26	19	13.5
27-30	56	38.6
<u>Marital Status:</u>		
Single	99	68.3
Married	46	31.7
<u>Education Level:</u>		
College Student	84	57.9
College Graduate	61	42.1

B. GENERAL FINDINGS

This section deals with the first basic research question: What are the factors that young adults presently consider as highly necessary for a creative marriage relationship? A number of significant differences are found when the data is analyzed by the variables of sex, age, marital status, and educational level.

1. By The Total Sample:

Since the survey is focused on finding the factors which are considered as highly necessary for a creative marriage relationship, in reporting the findings in the tables, only the data of "High" scale are included. "High" includes 1 "Very Necessary" and 2 "Highly Necessary" on the six-point scale responses.

Table 2 displays the result of the twenty-five factors tested.

Table 3 takes from the data presented in Table 2, those factors which are considered as highly necessary by 80 percent or more of the total sample.

(Table 2)

COMPLETE LISTING OF ALL FACTORS
CONSIDERED AS HIGHLY NECESSARY FOR A
CREATIVE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

Factors	No. of Respondents	% High of Respondents
Financial Security	59	41.7
Handsome ness or Beauty	88	60.7
Good Health	91	61.9
Sense of Humor	112	77.4
Good Character	138	95.2
Similar Social Class	58	40.5
Similar Race	65	43.4
Similar Religion	105	70.2
Participating in a Church	110	75.9
Congenial Parent-Child Rel.	135	93.1
To Have Children	114	78.5
Live with Parents	55	35.7
Choose Your Own Mate	134	92.5
Premarital Chastity	87	60.0
Sexual Loyalty	132	91.0
Sexual Compatibility	117	80.7
Love for Each Other	137	94.6
Trust for Each Other	133	91.7
Individuality	111	76.6
Equality	125	86.2
Cooperation	131	90.3
Open Communication	116	80.0
Mutual Interests	107	72.3
Mutual Understanding	139	95.9
Mutual Adjustment	120	82.8

(Table 3)

FACTORS CONSIDERED AS HIGHLY
NECESSARY FOR A CREATIVE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP
BY 80 PERCENT OR MORE OF THE SAMPLE

Factors	% High of Respondents
Mutual Understanding	95.9
Good Character	95.2
Love for Each Other	94.6
Congenial Parent-Child Relationship	93.1
Trust for Each Other	91.7
Sexual Loyalty	91.0
Choose Your Own Mate	92.5
Cooperation	90.3
Equality	86.2
Mutual Adjustment	82.8
Sexual Compatibility	80.7
Open Communication	80.0

2. By Variables Of The Sample:

(1) By Sex: Table 4 shows factors considered as highly necessary for creative marriage relationship by 80 percent or more of the male and female sample. Two factors, To Have Children and Sexual Compatibility are considered as highly necessary by male respondents, but are not similarly regarded as highly necessary by female respondents. Only the female sample considered three factors, Equality, Open Communication, and Participating in a Church, as highly necessary factors.

When one examines the significant difference (which means 10 percent or more of difference) between the two groups concerning those factors in Table 4, it is interesting to note that only To Have Children is more highly significant for males than for females. However, there are five factors, Cooperation, Sexual Loyalty, Equality, Open Communication, and Participating in a Church which are comparatively much higher for females than for males.

Although the factor Live With Parents is considered as not very necessary by both male and female respondents, there is a significant difference between the two groups. Since females suffer most in the case of a patriarchal residence, the young female adults have stronger demands to set up their own nuclear families after marriage. Thus, the percentage concerning wanting to Live With Parents is

comparatively much lower for females than for males. It is 20.1 percent and 58.7 percent respectively. Clearly, the traditional concept of marriage in which it is automatically assumed that the wife is married to the husband's family and will live with the husband's parents is changing.

The different findings between the male and female sample have significant implications in the modern society of Taiwan. The husband-wife roles as traditionally defined to be of a dominant-submissive pattern has challenged to varying degree by the consciousness-raising of younger women. Today, women in Taiwan are beginning to demand more rights and privileges and are sensitive in their private relationship with their husbands.

(Table 4)

FACTORS CONSIDERED AS HIGHLY NECESSARY
FOR A CREATIVE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP BY 80 PERCENT
OR MORE AMONG 69 MALES AND 76 FEMALES

Factors	Male % High	Female % High
Mutual Understanding	97.1	94.7
Trust for Each Other	94.2	89.5
Good Character	90.9	99.1
Congenial Parent-Child Relationship	89.6	95.1
Love for Each Other	88.8	98.7
Choose Your Own Mate	86.9	93.4
To Have Children	85.9	(75.0)
Sexual Loyalty	85.0	96.1
Cooperation	82.6	97.4
Sexual Compatibility	84.1	(77.6)
Mutual Adjustment	81.2	84.2
Equality	(79.7)	92.1
Open Communication	(72.5)	83.9
Participating in a Church	(70.5)	80.8

(2) By Age: Factors considered as highly necessary by 80 percent or more of the different age groups are shown in Table 5. According to methods used in sociology research when a sample is smaller than 25 respondents in a category the statistical data is insignificant. Since there are only 19 respondents in the 23-26 age group (less than the minimum of 25 respondents), there is no data shown in this age group in the table.

Two factors, Choose Your Own Mate and Open Communication are considered as highly necessary by the 20-22 age group, but they are not shown as highly necessary in the 27-30 age group. Only the 27-30 age group considers To Have Children is a highly necessary factor.

Two factors have significant differences between the age groups of 20-22 and 27-30 in Table 5. To Have Children is comparatively much higher in the 27-30 age group, while Choose Your Own Mate is relatively much higher in the younger group.

Two factors, Mutual Interests and Good Health are not considered as highly necessary by both age groups. However, there are significant differences between them. It is shown that Mutual Interests is considered as comparatively much higher for the 20-22 age group (74.3 %) than for the 27-30 age group (59.1 %). Good Health has a much higher percentage in the older group (67.9 %) than in the younger

group (55.7 %).

The different findings between the age groups has indicated that although young adults have much contact with modern culture, the adaptation of a new culture will vary from person to person and from age group to age group. Younger ones usually adapt more to the new culture than the older ones.

(Table 5)

FACTORS CONSIDERED AS HIGHLY NECESSARY
FOR A CREATIVE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP BY 80 % OR
MORE AMONG DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Factors	20-22 % High	27-30 % High
Love for Each Other	97.1	89.3
Mutual Understanding	97.1	96.4
Good Character	94.3	96.4
Congenial Parent-Child Relationship	90.8	93.2
Choose Your Own Mate	92.1	(78.6)
Cooperation	91.4	85.6
Trust for Each Other	88.6	94.6
Sexual Loyalty	88.6	94.6
Equality	87.1	83.9
Mutual Adjustment	84.2	80.4
Open Communication	82.8	(75.2)
Sexual Compatibility	81.4	80.4
To Have Children	(75.7)	86.5

(3) By Marital Status: Factors considered as highly necessary by 80 percent or more of married and single respondents are presented in Table 6. To Have Children and Open Communication are considered as highly necessary factors by the single sample only. Three factors of Mutual Adjustment, Sexual Compatibility, and Similar Religion are considered as highly necessary by the married sample, but they are not similarly regarded by the singles.

The factors being considered have significant differences between the two groups. Table 6 indicates that the married sample has comparatively much higher emphasis on the factors of Cooperation, Mutual Adjustment, and Similar Religion. Single respondents have relatively much higher emphasis on the factors of To Have Children and Choose Your Own Mate.

The factor Financial Security is not considered as highly necessary by either group. However, it is interesting to note that the married sample has comparatively much more concern about this factor than does the single sample: it is 65.9 percent and 37.4 percent respectively. It is clear that the married sample has faced more realistically the financial issue in marriage than has the single group.

(Table 6)

FACTORS CONSIDERED AS HIGHLY NECESSARY
FOR A CREATIVE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP BY 80% OR MORE
AMONG 46 MARRIED AND 99 SINGLE SAMPLES

Factors	Single % High	Married % High
Love for Each Other	95.7	89.1
Mutual Understanding	95.1	96.0
Choose Your Own Mate	94.7	80.4
Good Character	93.6	97.8
Sexual Loyalty	92.5	84.6
Trust for Each Other	89.9	95.7
Congenial Parent-Child Relationship	88.7	97.3
Equality	87.4	82.6
Cooperation	85.5	100
To Have Children	82.3	(72.4)
Open Communication	80.8	(74.7)
Sexual Compatibility	(79.7)	82.6
Mutual Adjustment	(78.2)	93.5
Similar Religion	(70.4)	80.7

(4) By Educational Level: Factors considered as highly necessary by 80 percent or more among the present-day college students and college graduates of the sample are shown in Table 7.

To Have Children is considered only by the graduates as a highly necessary factor, while Individuality is considered as highly necessary only by the college students.

It can be assumed that the present students and graduates have different experiences which have affected their thinking about marriage. Therefore, it was decided to examine the significant differences between these two groups. However, the data shows that only one factor of Premarital Chastity is found to be significantly different between college students (60.5 %) and college graduates (78.7 %). It shows that college students have a much more liberal attitude toward the sexual relationship prior to marriage than do the college graduates.

(Table 7)

FACTORS CONSIDERED AS HIGHLY NECESSARY
FOR A CREATIVE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP BY 80% OR MORE
AMONG 84 COLLEGE STUDENTS & 61 COLLEGE GRADUATES

Factors	C. Student % High	C. Graduate % High
Love for Each Other	94.6	93.4
Mutual Understanding	92.9	100
Trust for Each Other	91.7	91.8
Good Character	91.0	98.4
Choose Your Own Mate	92.5	89.2
Congenial Parent-Child Relationship	90.1	96.4
Equality	88.1	83.6
Cooperation	87.4	93.8
Sexual Loyalty	86.3	97.6
Sexual Compatibility	81.0	80.3
Mutual Adjustment	80.5	85.2
Individuality	80.5	(70.1)
To Have Children	(78.5)	82.7

C. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

Having dealt with the stated data obtained from the survey, it is necessary to ask these further questions: What does this data reveal? What is the actual situation behind this data? This section is therefore focused on the analysis of significant differences in the findings between the author's survey and the Taipei YMCA's survey of the Christian College Students' Attitudes Toward Marriage which was conducted in 1964.¹

It was presumed that rapid social change in Taiwan during the last decade has brought about some measurable changes concerning attitudes toward marriage. Thus, this section contains a comparison of the attitudes toward marriage of young adults in 1976 and 1964 as revealed in the two surveys.

The author feels it necessary to add a few words about the similarities and differences of the two surveys before comparing their findings.

First of all, the author is aware that only fourteen factors were tested in the 1964 survey, and those factors mainly fell into three of the six components of the 1976 survey. (The author has classified these components

¹Taipei YMCA, "A Survey of Christian College Students' Attitudes Toward Marriage," YMCA Monthly, (December 1964), 5-8.

in chapter one.) It is clear that the 1964 surveyor's chief concern was with these three components: Characteristics of the Partner, Similarities of the Partner, and Relationship Between Parent-Child. At that time, two other components, Roles of the Husband and Wife, and Interaction Between Husband-Wife were very rarely regarded as important components in the marriage relationship.

Therefore, the present analysis will be based on the comparison of the fourteen factors. Furthermore, it is also important that the comparison of the two samples have common characteristics. The data shown in the following table is then limited to 256 college students of the 1964 survey and 84 college students of the author's survey.

Table 8 presents the complete listing of the fourteen factors and their degree of necessity for a creative marriage relationship considered by the 1964 and 1976 samples.

Apparently, there are definite and numerous changes in the attitudes toward marriage relationships of the present college students as compared with those of earlier years. The trend toward more modern attitudes concerning the marriage relationship is relatively advanced in the recent sample.

(Table 8)

DEGREES OF NECESSITY OF THE 14 FACTORS
FOR A CREATIVE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP
IN THE 1964 AND 1976 SURVEYS

Factors	1964 % High	1976 % High
Good Character	100	91.0
To Have Children	98.1	(78.5)
Premarital Chastity	96.5	(60.5)
Similar Religion	94.3	(70.2)
Similar Race	87.2	(43.4)
Live With Parents	81.5	(35.7)
Love for Each Other	80.0	94.6
Similar Social Class	(78.7)	(40.5)
Choose Your Own Mate	(70.5)	92.5
Sense of Humor	(68.3)	(71.4)
Good Health	(67.8)	(61.9)
Mutual Interests	(60.9)	(72.3)
Handsomeness or Beauty	(52.9)	(60.7)
Financial Security	(35.3)	(41.7)

Table 8 shows that some factors considered as highly necessary in the sample of 1964 survey, such as To Have Children, Premarital Chastity, Similar Religion, Similar Race, and Live with Parents have not continued to receive preference. The percentages are amazingly low in the recent findings.

The 1964 sample had relatively higher emphasis on external factors or so called "traditional norms." Two factors, Good Character and Love for Each Other are regarded as highly necessary in both surveys. The percentages of preference are not much different for the factors of Sense of Humor, Handsomeness or Beauty, and Financial Security. Three factors, Mutual Interests, Choose Your Own Mate, and Love for Each Other have become more important in 1976 sample than in 1964 sample.

It could be that the influence of a more relationship-centered society has caused the factors of Mutual Interests and Love for Each Other to grow in desirability. A new emphasis on individualism which is increasingly a concern of the present young adults has caused a strong demand for the factor Choose Your Own Mate. It is the present trend that persons who formerly gave their primary loyalty to the family and merged their desires and concerns into it are now pursuing individual purposes. There are many Chinese, especially among the educated, who are beginning to appreciate the worth of the human individuality apart from

the social system. They are asserting their individual rights to pursue their own destiny. They now demand greater freedom in selecting their marriage partners and setting up their own homes.

For the older generation, marriage in Taiwan was between the two families not just two individuals. Many marriages were arranged by the parents in the past. Most young adults (even of college age) did not know how to initiate courtship. Today, a choice of a marriage partner is rapidly passing from the hands of the parents into those of the sons and daughters. If a young adult does not have the opportunity to meet a suitable mate, the family may still propose a desirable one. But there is no way to coerce the young adult to accept unconditionally the parents' arrangement. Young adults now regard the arranged marriage as unreasonable. They put more emphasis upon the desire for personal happiness and compatibility in marriage.

In 1964 survey the number of respondents who desired to Live with Parents was comparatively high. Apparently, today's young adults are against the patriarchal residence and they wish to have a separate one. Of course, the female young adults are strongly opposed to living with the parents. In Taiwan it means living with the groom's parents. They suffer the most in the case of a patriarchal residence. No doubt the present rapid move toward urbanization in Taiwan exerts an influence on the choice for the

nuclear family system. This is thought by the young people to minimize occasions for disagreements and conflicts between the generations and, even more important, to facilitate marital relationships.

A 98.1 percent of the 1964 sample regarded To Have Children as a very necessary factor for a creative marriage relationship. This gives it a place of great importance. A. R. Ohara's study in 1965 indicated that most Chinese college students expected at that time to have four or five children.² However, the recent sample sees To Have Children as not very important. The basic expectation for marriage is moving from the purpose of having children to the purpose of an intimate relationship between the spouses.

Nevertheless, the factor of Congenial Parent-Child Relationship is still regarded as highly necessary by the present college students (90.1 %). It implies that assuming a couple has children, Congenial Parent-Child Relationship is a very important factor for a creative marriage.

The rigid traditional concept about sex separated Chinese boys and girls from each other. They were not free to associate with each other. Romantic love was outlawed. They (particularly girls) were expected to keep themselves pure and chaste in preparation for marriage. Today, social

²Albert R. Ohara, Social Problems: Focus on Taiwan (Taipei: Mei-Ya press, 1973), p. 102.

interaction and signs of affection between the sexes in public are more frequent. This is interpreted by the young people as a natural companion of the emerging ideal of romantic love and courtship.

A 96.5 percent of the 1964 sample considered the factor of Premarital Chastity as very necessary for creative marriage. However, a great number of the present sample have questioned this or considered it outdated. Only 60.5 percent of the present college students still consider this a desirable factor. The new concept and the new freedom gained by the young people in the rapid social change have contributed to the decrease in the importance of premarital chastity.

Of course, one must realize that this survey is based on expressing the respondent's attitude toward the factors. The fact of the situation might be different. In other words, it is not necessarily true that a great number of Christian Chinese young adults have premarital sexual experience.

In earlier times, people were very concerned with the similarity of a spouse's background, such as Similar Religion, Similar Race, and Similar Social Class. However, present young adults give a very light vote for these factors. Again, the real cases of inter-marriage may not be many. It is especially true that very few inter-racial marriage occur in Taiwan. Nevertheless, it is almost certain

that inter-faith marriage will happen in the churches. This is particularly true in a country like Taiwan where Christians are a minority. According to the profile of Christianity in Taiwan, Christians are less than three percent of the total population.³ Christian young people claim that there are not many persons of the opposite sex and the same faith from which to choose. It is then, quite possible for a Christian to marry a non-Christian.

D. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Having examined and analyzed the obtained data, it is now time to take an overall review of the findings by summarizing to the following points.

The findings of the questionnaire show that the difference of variables (such as sex, age, marital status, and educational level) has brought differences in the attitudes of the respondents toward the marriage relationship.

The twelve factors which 80 percent or more of the 145 respondents considered as highly necessary for a creative marriage relationship are shown in Table 3. These factors appear to indicate that the sample has put a heavy emphasis on the internal and interpersonal categories. The

³Overseas Crusades, Christianity in Taiwan: A Profile (Taipei: The Church Growth Association of Taiwan, 1974), p. 7.

external category of the traditional perspectives and norms, (prejudice of social class status, religious and ethnic background, etc.) is not considered as highly necessary. This finding seems to support the proposition by Aaron L. Rutledge. He says that 75 to 90 percent of the factors involved in the creative marriage relationship today are those learned processes of relating and responding in a close personal relationship.⁴

In the past, the important factors unifying the Chinese marriage have been external, such as the law, the mores, public opinion, tradition, rigid discipline, and elaborate ritual. Today, this may not be so among educated young adults. The tendency for them is more and more toward an emphasis on democracy and equality, mutual understanding and adjustment, love and trust for each other, cooperation and open communication, etc. They have a greater investment in the husband-wife relationship and in sexual compatibility than in parenthood. This ideal is further reinforced by the strong desire of the young generation for a separate residence as newlyweds. They expect to live more on the basis of partnership.

The marriage pattern which emerges in the findings shows that the partnership view has gained rapidly in the

⁴Aaron L. Rutledge, Premarital Counseling (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1970), pp. 7-9.

past twelve years. The traditional view of marriage relationship has declined during the same period of times.

At present, in the new emerging form of partnership marriage, its unity inheres less and less in community pressures and more and more in such components as mutuality, comradeship, personal interaction, etc. These are the very qualities which are being pursued by the present young people of Taiwan in the new marriage pattern.

CHAPTER III

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SURVEY FINDINGS

A. FOR CHANGES IN THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE

This study has been concerned with exploring the nature of the young adults' new marriage attitudes by providing much needed descriptive data. Previous chapters have detailed this process and analyzed the findings. In order to examine the new concept of marriage which is revealed from the findings, two models of marriage, traditional and partnership, are discussed separately first.

1. A New Concept Of Marriage:

Chinese traditional marriage can be said to include elements of a institutional, situational, or non-interpersonal nature. Examples of these elements are traditional values, cultural mores, differentiation of expectations for male and female, etc. From these elements come the influences by which marriage is formed. They affect the behavior of husband and wife and provide sufficient justification for the marriage to continue. In the traditional marriage there is rarely communication between husband and wife, between parents (particularly the father) and children. The personal emotional involvement of the husband and the wife is not primary or central.

In contrast, in the partnership marriage, the members enjoy a high degree of self-expression and at the same time are united by bonds of affection, congeniality, and common interests.¹ The personal interaction of husband and wife is marked by mutuality, consensus, and equality. Arlo Compaan has done a recent study of contemporary young adult marital styles. His sample shows newlyweds oriented to husband-wife roles more than to parental roles, openly communicative of their most intimate thoughts and feelings, and concerned to express anger as well as love.² Compaan's findings strongly agree with the statements: Personal growth and change is essential to marriage; and communication is the basis of a marriage. Couples are concerned to play together, to have a variety of fun, and to improve their sexual relationship.³

In another study conducted by Robert Blood and D. M. Wolfe one central point is that companionship is regarded as the most valuable aspect of the new marriage pattern. They have defined four dimensions of companionship as matters of organization, information, as colleague, and in

¹Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, The Family 3d ed. (New York: American Book, 1963), p. 26.

²Arlo D. Campaan, "A Study of Contemporary Young Adult Marital Styles," (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1973), pp. 159-60.

³Ibid.

friendship.⁴

Blood and Wolfe operationalized their terms more discretely and tend to be more "behavioral" in trying to identify partnership marriage. By "organizational" they mean joint husband and wife participation in community, social or church activities. "Informative" means talking to each other about things which occurred when husband and wife were apart. "Colleague" means the wife making possible contacts with aspects of her husband's occupation. Finally, "friendship" means those friends held in common by both husband and wife.⁵

Since statements cited above are mainly drawn from American culture, the actual situation in Taiwan concerning those issues needs further verification. Nevertheless, a review of current literature and the survey findings reveals that the nature of young adult marriage in contemporary society is in the midst of profound change. In Taiwan this is a continuing process and not yet an accomplished fact. In historical times, the Chinese marriage pattern has been, and at present is, in transition from a tradition to a partnership. The traditional marriage is regarded as representing an older pattern; partnership marriage is seen as

⁴Robert O. Blood and Donald M. Wolfe, Husbands and Wives (New York: Free Press, 1960), p. 150.

⁵Ibid., p. 149.

the newly emerging form.

Although young adults in Taiwan are open to a new pattern of marriage, the partnership marriage is not to be considered as having already been fully realized and successfully operated by them. It means that the partnership-type marriage need not necessarily be considered to be the modern practice, nor that traditional features no longer exist in contemporary Chinese marriages.

Furthermore, in this present study "traditional" and "partnership" have been briefly described as being different and discrete and having contrasting meanings. The author has done this to construct a model for research purposes, but this is not imply that these exist completely separately in the reality of married life. Such distinctions can be made for research purposes but they are not necessarily separated so clearly in actual cases. In fact, the author would expect any particular marriage to display some combination of each of the two components of the model. Moreover, some attention might be given to the fact that traditional and partnership dimensions of marriage are potentially mutually supportive and enriching, and one often presupposes the other.

The author's survey findings have shown the real possibility that the traditional components of marriage are partly neglected by the sample (especially by the younger and single respondents). Needless to say, however, if these

components are not recognized or dealt with properly before marriage, they would affect later married life.

In other words, a marriage which begins with emphasis as a partnership pattern might have institutional or traditional aspects which might not be recognized at the time of very early marriage. But they would serve later either as stabilizing or destroying forces when the impact of the partnership components fades. The author notes that these two patterns stand in a polar relation and both have to be considered in order to obtain a full understanding of marriage.

2. A Comment On The New Concept:

As the survey indicates, the concept of marriage is changing in Taiwan. The impact of social change has resulted in the consciousness-raising of young adults. The effort of Christian churches and other organizations such as YWCA, Taiwan Christian Academy, etc., have great contribution to the movement of women's rights through seminars, lectures, and discussions. Consciousness-raising of present young adults is a major force bringing about the new concept of marriage. It is hoped that the new emerging marriage pattern will not simply be built as something new on the traditional, old faulty pattern in terms of unequal rights for men and women. Hopefully, it will adapt itself to the new needs of modern people and society. Therefore, it will

build new structures which are stronger, more beautiful, more creative and more fully humanizing for both husbands and wives.

Today marriage in its traditional utilitarian functions is diminishing in importance, while its role in providing intimacy, warmth, and emotional security is increasing rapidly. In this situation, the first sensible thing to do is to recognize plainly that partnership marriage is ideal, but it is also difficult to achieve.

It was comparatively easy to make the old-time marriage work. In the old days, the primary purpose of marriage was to carry out the family duties (especially to have children to continue the family name). Of course, there was always the hope that marriage would bring personal happiness to the husband and wife. Undoubtly, some of these marriages were very happy. But that was of minor importance. In this sense, marriage in the past called for no special preparation because its success depended not on the skilled management of interpersonal relationships but on the maintenance of the family tradition.

Today, the main goal of marriage is personal-mutual fulfillment of the partners; family functions are considered less important. In addition, modern people live under great stress (particularly those urban dwellers). The pace of life is swift and sometimes furious. Often it is quite difficult for a married couple to find the leisure, and the

detachment, to cultivate their companionship. Also modern marriage is based on the nuclear family system and on a mobile population. Therefore, in times of crisis, the support of dependable relatives, familiar surroundings, and trusted friends are often lacking. Furthermore, in earlier times the marrying couple were apt to have a great deal in common such as similar religion, education, social class, and values. Sociological studies have shown that the similarities of the couple's background made for the most stable marriage.⁶ However, young people today neglect these factors and sometimes marry those who are of very different background. Such marriages could be challenging and creative. But it demands a great deal of effort to develop such elements as mutual adjustment, mutual understanding, and open communication.

The traditional marriage is formed on the assertion that marriage is a static system. It has emphasized the institution and ignored the importance of the husband-wife relationship. Such an emphasis may have served a useful purpose in the past; but it is neither relevant nor applicable to the hopes and expectations of married couples today.

A new marriage pattern is a dynamic relationship,

⁶Robert Lee and Marjorie Casebier, The Spouse Gap (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 31.

and a relationship is a living thing. Since it is living, a marriage must grow to be a creative and productive relationship. As a chemical engineer, the author has learned something about creativity. The secret of creativity is to put things together in a new way. Similarly, a creative marriage means that man and woman should discover a new way of life together and recognize that it calls for new intelligence and skill. In other words, the couple have to accept marriage as a task--a task at which both husband and wife must work together. They must be skillful in team work, good at cooperating with others. Many times they require outside help, the guidance and support of a competent counselor.

B. FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The marriage pattern is changing in the modern society of Taiwan. However, the transition from the traditional to the new marriage pattern is far from easy. In many respects it represents a reversal of values and concepts. It requires much learning and a lot of guidance to enable couples to make the transition. In the rapidly changing society, many Chinese couples want and need to make the transition. Lacking the knowledge and skill to do so, unfortunately they end up in confusion or divorce. These crises in marriage manifest a need to move from a remedial to a preventive approach in dealing with marital failure.

In the United States, more and more institutions, agencies, groups, and individuals are seeking solutions to the critical situation in marriage and the family. Increasingly, the focus is on preventive action, attempting to get to the cause of the problem before it develops. It has been clearly shown that much agony, remorse, and failure could have been avoided if there had been some rudimentary learning before people entered the marriage relationship.

It is sad to note that most Chinese have never been helped in preparing for a partner before marriage. Like many young people in other countries, a Chinese young adult can get a college degree today without ever having learned anything about how to communicate, how to resolve conflicts, what to do with anger and other negative feelings, and how to properly relate to the opposite sex. Moreover, most of the time the Chinese people do not teach boys and girls to become not only independent but also inter-dependent; that is, to find strength in themselves and in their relationship with the opposite sex.

Marriage is what one makes it. Today, young people's expectations and desires for their new marriage pattern are high and encouraging. Naturally, the price which has to be paid for that new marriage pattern is high and demanding. The new pattern of partnership marriage in its developmental period calls for more emotional maturity than does any other relationships. Building a creative marriage takes the

loving skill of two persons who are willing to work at it, and to keep it growing.⁷ In Carl Rogers' words, "Every continuing husband-wife relationship must be built, rebuilt, and continually refreshed by mutual personal growth."⁸ However, most Chinese young adults have not developed the skill or the knowledge to handle this changing and challenging new marriage pattern.

The traditional Chinese dream of a marriage "made in heaven" is totally unrealistic today. The author realizes that ignorance is the prime cause of marital troubles and that marriage preparation is the greatest need for the prospective couple. Chinese young people need learning to become partners. They need to be educated and helped to be aware of the importance of being thoughtful and prepared for their roles in a partnership marriage. For this concern, Chinese minister must develop the concept and practice of marriage preparation and try to do something about it.

There could be various ways of approaching marital preparation. Among them, the author regards the premarital counseling program as the most realistic and effective to meet the needs of the present situation in Taiwan. Through

⁷Howard J. Clinebell, Growth Counseling for Marriage Enrichment (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 45.

⁸Carl R. Rogers, Becoming Partners (New York: Delta Press, 1972), pp. 29-30.

premarital counseling we can reach the couple's personal, inter-personal, and innermost problems and help them to face their own needs.

Therefore, although premarital counseling should include an instruction or discussion of "the facts of married life," this is not the primary task of preparation for the new marriage pattern. An intellectual teaching approach is insufficient. We need a new dynamic approach which explores inter-personal relationships as a more complete preparation for the new marriage pattern. Today, the couple should be encouraged and assisted to make a careful actualization of themselves, of each other, and of their relationships. In other words, to be creative and effective marriage preparation must move decisively from the importation of knowledge to the investigation of personal and interpersonal dynamics--and on to the facilitation of the personality growth and the necessary behavior change over a period of time.⁹

It is likely that such a growth-oriented premarital counseling is far more effective than merely feeding couples general facts about married life. The growth perspective provides a more workable and realistic approach. It points to what is really appropriate and needed by the

⁹David R. Mace, "Education and Preparation for Marriage," Pastoral Psychology, XXIV (Fall, 1975), 13.

couple. It focuses on the personalized training and coaching in relationship-building skills.¹⁰

It is encouraging that some American churches and institutions have recently developed a fine growing ministry in the growth-oriented premarital counseling program. In Taiwan it is relatively difficult to establish such a program, but it is urgently needed.

C. FOR MARRIAGE COUNSELORS

The survey finding also indicates that modern marriage relationships have become more complex in terms of the expectations and demands for mutual fulfillment of personal needs. In any creative marriage the partners will have certain needs satisfied. Clinebell emphasizes that a happy marriage is one in which there is a relatively high degree of satisfaction of mutual needs, and an unhappy marriage is one in which there is great frustration.¹¹ Many marriages remain frustrated, because of serious conflicting expectations--the gap between expectation and fulfillment. It seems therefore, that the expectation (particularly those twelve most desirable factors considered by the sample of this survey) coupled with the stresses of daily

¹⁰Clinebell, Growth Counseling, p. 48.

¹¹Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 96.

living, may be contributing to the major frustrations and difficulties of contemporary marriage relationships.

Today, marriage counselors must be prepared to deal with changing role expectations and shifting marriage motivation of the couple. The counselor must realize that roles of husband and wife are always in the process of being culturally re-defined. This is because the couples who live them are always in the process of re-defining them. The marriage must therefore, be satisfying to both, flexible as regards changes, and creative in relation to the future.¹² The counselor can facilitate discussions between spouses as to their expectations and desires rather than debate the value or form of specific husband-wife roles.

Counseling deals with values. The counselor has values and the counselee has his/her own. In doing counseling the counselor should be aware of his/her own value system and alert to that of his/her clients. The values of both counselor and client operate in the identification of the problem area as well as in the movement toward the resolution of conflict.¹³ A marriage counselor has to be aware of what values he/she brings concerning attitudes

¹²Lyle B. Gangsei, Manual for Group Premarital Counseling (New York: Association Press, 1971), p. 162.

¹³C. H. Patterson, Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 73.

toward a creative marriage to counseling. It is also necessary for the counselor to know what internal value conflicts he/she faces and has faced in his/her own marriage relationship.

The findings of this survey make evident that each person has a different degree of expectations which indicate the varied value systems. As a marriage counselor it is very important to help a couple clarify their own expectations for their partners and the married life. It is well for the counselor to share his/her values with the couple but not to impose them on the couple. No qualified counselor will hold preconceived notions of what is best for the clients, or what the counselees ought to be, or manipulate the clients. A good counselor should focus on helping the clients define themselves in terms of their own needs and potential, not in terms of the clients' needs based on the particular counselor's ideas.¹⁴

Therefore, before making judgment and generalization about an individual's attitudes and expectations regarding factors for a creative marriage, it is necessary for the marriage counselor to carefully consider the popular views espoused in mass media or other sources or those held by him-/herself. For this concern, the questionnaire

¹⁴Charlotte Clinebell, Counseling for Liberation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 19.

used for this study which covers the most important subjects for married life can be used as a tool to help the couple think about themselves and about their mutual expectations.

Using this questionnaire in premarital and marital counseling would help a counselor to know the couple better, to encourage the couple to express themselves, and to stimulate further discussion covering the important subjects. Thus, the author suggests after the questionnaire has been completed by the couple, the counselor should take time to discuss carefully with the couple the significant differences in their replies.

In a creative marriage, the development of different functions, new attitudes, and expectations, requires that partners adjust to each other. A marriage counselor may facilitate these adjustments if he/she understands as precisely as possible the changes and the differences existing in the couple's attitudes. Therefore, when dealing with marital problems, the counselor can use this questionnaire to help the couple view their relationship more realistically and possibly help them to lessen their conflicting attitudes. By using this questionnaire, the counselor has a positive role in assisting the couple to develop a creative and growth-producing relationship.

When the questionnaire is used for premarital counseling a related question must first be clarified. That is,

can the result of a couple's score be used to predict marital happiness? The counselor should realize that no scientific tests exist which can assure that correct choices by the partners will mean marriage will be happy. There is no guarantee that the future marriage will be very happy even if the proposed partners' scale is the same in the questionnaire. However, it is assumed that the higher the scale rating on, the higher the degree of necessity for that factor for creative marriage. The questionnaire may reveal that the greater the differences in the scale about the marriage attitudes, the greater the degree of conflicting expectations in marriage.

Since a major task of the premarital counselor is to help the engaged couple examine their readiness for marriage, the counselor needs to check their motives for marriage, what they expect in marriage, and what fears and anxieties they may have. The result of this questionnaire may help the counselor to alert the couple as to possible points of friction.

If a proposed couple responds to specific factors very differently, and their maturity is not strong enough to cope with the differences, it might be better for the couple not to marry right away. The counselor's important task is then to point out those areas where understanding, adjustment, change, and growth would be necessary and to encourage them to agree to lengthen the period of times for

marriage preparation. During this time of preparation the counselor should be willing to do anything he/she can to assist the couple.

D. FOR PASTORS AND CHURCHES

This section presents some implications for pastors and churches which are implied in the survey findings. It is observed that society in Taiwan is becoming a more open society rather than a closed one. A consequence of this is that young Christians expect closer relationships with their spouses as well as with their pastor. The emphasis upon personal relationship implies that pastor would be wise to engage youth in deep dialogue about their religious beliefs and experiences. The pastor should not be satisfied or concerned with only their practice of church routines. It also implies that we need a relationship-centered rather than an authoritative approach in relating to young adults in the churches. Young adults are by their present nature, non- or anti-authoritarian. They will no longer be looking for an authoritative answer to guide them, but rather a context in which they may reach agreement by an objective method. Any authoritarian approach by the church which does not consider the young adult's situation will be ineffective. The inductive approach in which the authority, the church, leads as a servant-friend rather than posing as a master will find greater receptivity.

The Christian church exists as the body of believers to give support to individuals in living in a specific social-culture milieu. Another implication of the survey response to that concern requires the church to adjust its programs lest it become culturally and socially irrelevant and thus unable to fulfill its mission in the world. It is suggested that the producers of church programs be aware of the present young adults' needs, interests, and expectations. This matter has also directly affected the role of the pastor as a counselor in the church. Thus, in order to redefine the effective role of pastor-counselor the minister must ask oneself the same question: "What do the young people need of me?"

The survey findings reported above give a direct indication of the new interests and expectations in marriage of young Christians. They place the primary emphasis upon the marital dyad and less upon their roles as parents. They are expecting to heavily invest both in terms of time and energy in the spousal relationship. One implication from this is that church programs should be geared to couples or mixed groups. The traditional men's and women's group will hold little attraction to young adults. The church can assist in creating discussion or growth groups or a couples' fellowship for those people, so that they can have playful and sharing times together.

Chinese young adults are looking for new ways to

relate to society and to interpret the meaning of marriage. Since marriage is the legitimate concern of all ministers, they ought to devote their efforts to its improvement. They must find new ways to help in preparing Christians to meet new problems in marriage and make it creative.

The transition of marriage from an established to a new value system constitutes one of the most serious challenges that the Taiwanese church faces today. In today's fast changing society, Christian marriage needs to be grounded in the stable life of the church. The church can and must guide marriage by providing the proper values and attitudes toward it and by lending support and healing in times of distress. This study is clearly calling the church to rethink and rearticulate its position on marriage. For the Taiwanese church two areas are particularly in need of reflection and reprogramming. One is the problem of inter-faith marriage and the other is sexuality.

1. The Problem of Inter-faith Marriage:

Generally speaking, no religion encourages mixed marriages, for it is known that such a marriage is hazardous, if not undesirable. In Taiwan, in these inter-faith marriages, oftentimes, the Christian spouse loses his/her faith. Also, there is less chance for the couple to be really happy and harmonious in their relationship since they hold such different values. Furthermore, inter-faith

marriages create more complicated and serious problems in the joint family system where the Christian member has to make many adjustments to those non-Christian parents-in-law and other close relatives with regard to their expectations of the newcomer's participating in traditional rites and family customs.

As mentioned before, the Christian population in Taiwan is less than three percent of the total population. Unavoidably, there are cases of inter-faith marriage in Taiwan. Mixed marriages are bound to encounter problems. However, some cases have proved there is a possibility of respect for the Christian spouse and freedom for him/her to continue in the Christian faith or even a possibility of conversion for the non-Christian spouse.

It is the author's opinion that when we realistically consider the present situation in Taiwan, we do not have to be dogmatic or be absolutely against inter-faith marriage. There are instances where it is necessary to leave the door open for negotiation. Nevertheless, neither do we encourage this type of marriage.

On this whole matter of inter-faith marriage the main concern of the church should be preventive. It is much easier to prevent mixed marriages than to cure them. The best prevention is through education. Poor nurture from the church can lead to inter-faith marriage. Therefore, Christian education and nurture should be given early in life so

that the Christian faith will be meaningful to the individual Christian.

The home nurture of the individual is of greatest importance in Christian education. However, nurture in the Christian home should be supplemented with planned courses and training in church programs. A program including guidance or counseling (especially premarital counseling) may be set up to help young people when they face practical problems.

Another preventive way which may be more directive is for the Christian families and the church to work together in providing opportunities for exposing our young adults to each other. Denominational and inter-denominational activities should be promoted. When our young Christians have more good possibilities, inter-faith marriage will naturally be decreased.

2. The Problem of Sexuality:

Another serious matter for the Taiwanese church to be concerned about is in the area of sexuality. Generally speaking, Chinese are very conservative and strict about sex. Boys and girls are not free to associate with each other. In the older times, separation of the sexes was often enforced as early as the eighth year. Moreover, because it is taboo to discuss sex, there is a problem about sex itself. It may be manifested in fear of sex relations by

young people (particularly the young women) due to some distorted attitudes toward sex.

In the author's practical counseling experience, it has been sensed that ignorance and misinformation are the main causes contributing to sexual difficulties. The problem of sex is directly related to the lack of adequate sex education. The tragedy in Taiwan today is that so many youth have not received any adequate sex education at home, at schools, or in the church.

Adequate sex education is not available for young people because talk about sex is tabooed. And because of the forbidding attitude toward sex, young adults tend to conceal their feelings or questions about it. However, curiosity about sex is a part of natural development for normal youth. Therefore, instead of receiving essential sex education, young people pick up "sex knowledge" from other places and often through questionable means or persons (such as pornography or a misinformed friend). The harm that inadequate sex education can cause is incalculable.

With these prevailing sex problems and the tendency of young adults' new expectations for more joyful and compatible sexual life, the churches need to consider making available adequate sex education in their teachings and programs. It is predictable that the Chinese church may encounter more difficulties than Western countries in trying to work in this area. Nevertheless, a wise, caring, and

responsible minister will be looking for opportunities to educate and help youth. The minister will give young people the very important message of the goodness of human sexuality through individual contacts, group meetings, and premarital counseling. It is important for the minister to get across the message that sex is a gift of God, created for the well-being of mankind, and thus sex is good.

Being aware of the present young people's liberal attitude toward premarital sex, the minister has to be concerned with this matter. Some engaged couples may feel that premarital sex is an appropriate symbol for their love. However, sex has a meaning which is broader than physical love. There is another layer of meaning in sex--responsibility, loyalty, and respect. Here the quality of sexuality is the quality of life. The minister must help young adults to build up a wholesome attitude toward sex and the right use of it. To meet these needs, ministers must first be well informed on the subject and be emotionally stable in order to conduct sex education without embarrassment.

PART TWO

AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF A
PASTORAL PREMARITAL COUNSELING PROGRAM
IN TAIWAN

CHAPTER IV
AN EVALUATION OF PASTORAL PREMARITAL
COUNSELING IN TAIWAN

Basically, the author views Christian marriage as an commitment relationship rather than merely as a contract relationship. However, for discussing the practical aspects of a premarital counseling program, the author will also emphasize the contract relationship of marriage. The significance which the view of marriage as contract has for premarital counseling is that it focuses on the demands for negotiating and renegotiating the marriage contract. Directing premarital counseling to this point seems appropriate since this demand is part of the ongoing nature of marriage relationship.

On this basis the author sets forth the following as a focus for premarital counseling: The function of premarital counseling is to assist a couple in being as clear as they are able to be about the contents of the marriage contract they are negotiating.¹ For Christians, premarital counseling is affirmed as an aid to the couple when they

¹Theron S. Nease, "Premarital Pastoral Counseling Literature in American Protestantism 1920-1971: A Descriptive and Evaluative Study of Family Models," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1973), p. 350.

come to the minister, taking and making vows and contracting together with a pledge of faithfulness.

What are the implications of this view for premarital ministry? This leads to the more basic question: Why do premarital counseling at all? Or more clearly the question is: How important is premarital counseling in establishing a creative Christian marriage?

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF PASTORAL PREMARITAL COUNSELING

In chapter three of this study the implications of the survey findings indicated a fairly general recognition of the importance of premarital counseling as a part of the ministerial function. However, in order to obtain a more valid perspective for answering the above questions, it is advisable to review the writings of several acknowledged contemporary authorities on the subject. Such a review will indicate that this practice is important as a form of pastoral ministry, and hence as an area for study and inquiry.

1. From The Viewpoint Of Pastoral Counselors:

Howard Clinebell holds that premarital counseling has value. He recognizes that it may be more educational than counseling per se, since meetings are held at the pastor's initiative rather than through a couple's seeking help with a stated problem. Thus Clinebell cites premarital counseling as one type of counseling which he calls,

"educative counseling."² This being the case, a minister needs both sensitivity to the values of short-term "individualized education" or "counseling-oriented education," and sufficient training in order to make such sessions "eminently worthwhile."³ A minister who can accomplish this will find that the premarital ministry often develops into further counseling with couples.

In one of his earlier publications Paul Johnson favors premarital counseling as an exercise of pastoral concern to persons as they undertake what he terms, "the venture of love into marriage." He anticipates that such an effort should be made an integral part of a minister's regular activity. Johnson states,⁴

The pastor who takes one's counseling responsibilities seriously will be known by the young people and families of one's church as one to see at such a time. In performing such a deeply needed service the pastor will be related significantly to an ever-widening circle of families, who find the pastor and the divine love he/she represents a saving resource in times of vital need.

Sensing that some couples may not approach a minister far enough in advance of their marriage date to allow

²Howard J. Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 196.

³Ibid., pp. 196-197, 202.

⁴Paul E. Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 138.

for extensive premarital counseling, Johnson still considers that even a brief period together can be helpful. He places a major emphasis upon the pastor's love for persons as a basis for premarital conferences. He also considers traits of the minister's personhood and his/her level of training as possible barriers to meaningful premarital counseling.⁵

Charles Stewart claims that couples see their pastor for premarital counseling is as essential as the bride's bouquet.⁶ Thus, Stewart is clearly enthusiastic about the possibilities of doing this type of pastoral work. He says⁷

... these sessions before marriage are being seen by the minister as a precious opportunity to help the couple face marriage with more insight and awareness of its values, both interpersonal and religious.... Even if the couple are complete strangers to the pastor, he needs not feel the days preceding marriage are too few to accomplish something of purpose with the couple.

Stewart's very warm endorsement of premarital counseling is given without hesitation. For him the main question for the minister concerning premarital counseling is, "Am I prepared vocationally for this most important work?"

⁵Ibid., pp. 136-38.

⁶Charles W. Stewart, The Minister As Marriage Counselor, Rev. ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 59.

⁷Ibid., p. 50.

Thus, a minister should receive adequate training in order to carry out effective work with couples in premarital interviews.⁸

First written in 1958 and then expanded as a premarital guidebook for pastors in 1975, this manual by Wayne Oates shows the relationship of premarital counseling to other dimensions of a pastor's work. His overall emphasis is one of affirming premarital counseling as a vital and important part of ministry to families. Oates says,⁹

The history of the people of God in the congregation, therefore, has taken form in teaching, sacraments, ordinances, rituals, and customs as to what is required and/or expected of the pastor in premarital pastoral ministries.

Seward Hiltner in his book Pastoral Counseling, mentions briefly premarital counseling in an affirmative fashion and sees this practice as one way of making some connection between the marriage service and the life together which follows. Hiltner states that the importance of meeting face-to-face with a couple prior to their marriage derives from the fact that "the direction of the couple's attitudes as they enter upon marriage may have fundamental significance in directing the pattern of marriage life

⁸Ibid., p. 59.

⁹Wayne E. Oates and Wade Rowatt, Before You Marry Them (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975), p. 26.

itself."¹⁰

2. From The Viewpoint Of Other Professionals:

Besides writers within the field of Christian ministry, literature from other professions also shows confidence in the usefulness of premarital counseling, though in varying degrees.

Aaron Rutledge, who is a counselor-psychotherapist, has an extremely high view of premarital counseling and makes the following claim:¹¹

As marriage approaches, all the forces of nature--sex, love, self-fulfillment, relating--are available to be guided and utilized in renewed personality growth. This is one the greatest teachable moments or opportunities for learning. A minimum of skilled help at this time can effect changes in personality that would take years to accomplish later, and basic ways of handling relationship problems can be developed for a life of meaningful interaction.

For Rutledge premarital counseling is the greatest education and clinical opportunity in the life of a person. It effects adult personality changes and at the same time is an investment in the soon-to-be-born children. In his own words, "Premarital counseling gives a chance to effect

¹⁰Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1949), p. 224.

¹¹Aaron L. Rutledge, Premarital Counseling (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1970), p. xii.

both the chicken and the egg."¹²

Rex Skidmore, who is in the profession of social work, refers to premarital counseling as "an ounce of prevention."¹³ He is generally optimistic regarding its value and importance. Skidmore believes it has much to offer even in a short-term relationship. He says,¹⁴

A few interviews before the wedding, conferring frankly and confidentially with a counselor may well prevent numerous difficulties and heartaches, and obviate interviews after marriage.

As a family therapist Evelyn Duvall firmly recommends premarital counseling for everyone, and not only for those couples who may feel that they are especially in need of it. Duvall states,¹⁵

Few people attempt to build a home without consulting an architect. Even where they have their own ideas about a house, sensible people consult an architect to have them checked carefully. The same point of view is rapidly becoming current with regard to marriage, which also is given design and symmetry only after careful planning and study. Premarital counseling is becoming increasingly the source of architectural charts for the prospective bride and groom.

¹²Ibid., p. xii.

¹³Rex A. Skidmore, Marriage Counseling (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), p. 323.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 323.

¹⁵Evelyn M. Duvall, When You Marry (New York: Association Press, 1962), p. 107.

Summarizing the views of the cited authorities in the field it can be seen that all of them consider premarital counseling to be very important in working toward a creative marriage.

The main prupose of premarital counseling is not to arrange marriage, but to help people explore the system of values to which they will be committed for married life. It can also help people to know how they feel about each other and what their common values are. Knowing the person one is living with, his/her psychic state, what his/her life concerns are, makes it easier and more creative to live together. And at the same time, more adequate preparation through premarital counseling would have diminished if not eliminated many of the disturbances the couple face. Premarital counseling is preventive therapy for the family in the making. It is the best way to help the young couple to plan intelligently and cooperatively for a happy and successful marriage.

3. Premarital Counseling Is A New Frontier For Concern In The Taiwanese Church:

Historically, the church like the state is dependent upon the family as an integral part of its structure. The church in contemporary society will continue as an effective institution only if it is supported by happy and stable marriages and families. Hence, the church should be

extensively involved in education, caring, and healing in relation to marriage and family. Particularly, in these days of transition, the Taiwanese church should provide the confused family system with new guidance and effective service. The minister who leads the church is the key person who must be the first one to be aware of the tremendous need of a Christian ministry to marriage and family.

Apparently, one of the most effective responses of the church to the needs of confused and fractured marriages and families is in the area of prevention. Therefore, the churches seriously concerned with marriage and the family should become more aware of the need for premarital counseling and the subjects which it should include. Today the program of premarital counseling must be considered as a most important ministry to the marriage and family. No ministry is quite as joyous and rewarding as that of being a fellow seeker after God's blessing along side those about to enter into a sacred marriage and establish a Christian home.

Pastoral care has been an essential part of the minister's role through the centuries. The ministry of pastoral care, though it was not labeled as pastoral counseling, is as old as the church. Decades of sociological and psychological studies have given new significance to the minister's role. The minister's purpose is still basically the same, but he/she is called upon to add new meaning to

old tasks. Although premarital counseling is relatively new in its form and is trying to establish a scientific authenticity in its own right, it is not new in its purpose.

Most Taiwanese ministers are still reluctant to face the call of their responsibility in the preparation of couples that come to them to be married. Yet these same ministers are increasingly alarmed by the increasing marriage and family problems. Taiwanese ministers in the changing society where marriage and family problems are becoming prevalent should be challenged by them to aid young couples in securing a meaningful and creative married life. They should not think of the marriage in their congregation as just another wedding. It is misleading for them to assume that every marriage is sacred merely because sacred words are spoken in the wedding ceremony. Instead they must recognize the place of premarital counseling in their pastoral concern. They must understand the need for it and the techniques to achieve it. Premarital counseling is now a new frontier for pastoral concern in the churches of Taiwan.

B. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN TAIWAN

There are four most important decisions young people must make in planning their future:

- (1) Their choice of religious, moral, and social beliefs and values.
- (2) Their choice of a lifelong marriage companion.

- (3) Their choice of a vocation.
- (4) Their choice of how much education they should have.¹⁶

In Taiwan, there are hundreds of Christian churches that have majored in leading young people to commit their lives to Christ. In recent years the tendency has been growing for young people to get at least a college education. There are goodly number of vocational schools and training programs to assist young people in preparing and selecting a vocation. In contrast it is surprising how little preparation is given to marriage.

In the past, numbers of marriages were arranged by the parents. Manytimes the young people were scarcely consulted at all. Recently, many of our young adults demand to choose their own mates. However, our society (including the churches) has given very little help to young people as they go through the significant process of selecting a marriage partner and of becoming a partner. The author asked some college students in Taiwan whether or not they would choose their own marriage partners. It was not surprising that a number of them said, "Yes, but because I am too inexperienced to choose wisely, I would rather leave it to my parents."

¹⁶Herbert J. Miles, The Dating Game (Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 1975), p. 11.

Many of those young adults who intend to choose their own mates may be victims of the romantic illusion that love happens at first sight. There will be a happy marriage once that love has occurred and there is nothing one needs to do about it. When they are going to be married they are thinking only about dowry, the invitation list, clothes, flowers, the wedding ceremony, honeymoon, and a new house. Very likely, they have some vague notion that the minister will explain the details of the wedding ceremony. Thus, they come with the only purpose of asking the minister to perform the ceremony. They do not come of their own accord to consult the pastor about preparation for marriage or personal problems.

It became clear to the author that "to perform the wedding ceremony" is what most Chinese young people ask when they seek out a clergyman to be married, and what most clergy give. This is not premarital counseling, but a wedding rehearsal. And in most cases the only "premarital instruction" is the wedding service itself.

There are some Taiwanese pastors who are aware of the need of premarital preparation. They may have passed the responsibility to the medical profession by urging the couple to see a physician. Unfortunately, ninety-nine percent of the couples who go to the doctor for preparation get only a blood test and a pat on the back saying, "Everything is fine. Congratulations!" The doctor has neither the

time, the interest, nor the inclination to give premarital counseling. Of course, to see a doctor and have a blood test is very important as a part of premarital preparation. Nevertheless, if our young people are to receive premarital counseling that will prepare them for a happy and creative life together, the minister will have to carry most of the responsibility.

In Joseph Landrud's study it is shown that 61 percent of the sampled pastors conducted premarital counseling with the couples they married in 1958.¹⁷ Gerald Hill in his doctoral dissertation finds that of the ministers he polled in 1969, 93.68 percent conducted some type of conference with couples prior to performing their wedding ceremony. Roughly 64 percent of these ministers met once or twice with couples; 31 percent met three or four times; and the rest of the ministers met five times or more.¹⁸ In another more recent study, Arlo Compaan finds that:¹⁹ "25.5 percent of the sampled couples have had some kind of

¹⁷Joseph C. Landrud, "A Study of Premarital Counseling in A Church," (Unpublished Th.M. Thesis, School of Theology at Claremont, 1959), p. 42.

¹⁸Gerald K. Hill, "Premarital Counseling Practices and Attitudes Among Ministers of the U.M.C.," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1969), p. 58.

¹⁹Arlo D. Campaan, "A Study of Contemporary Young Adult Marital Styles," (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1973), p. 153.

premarital counseling by ministers in 1973." These findings indicate that besides the interest manifested in the writings on this subject, American ministers are in fact doing some type of premarital counseling.

Part III of the questionnaire used for this study in Taiwan shows that only 4.5 percent of the married respondents have been counseled before their marriage. It indicates that recently a very few Taiwanese ministers have met with couples before marriage. However, as a Taiwanese minister the author is sure that most of the pastors who met couples prior to the wedding only gave them "a lesson." This was based on the authoritative structure of admonition.

The authoritative structure and instruction-giving goals of marriage preparation are no longer acceptable to many young couples. If ministers are inflexible and do not take into account the needs, experiences, and uniqueness of individuals, such an approach to premarital preparation misses the point. Undoubtly, what these ministers have done has not been of real help to the couples.

The tragedy we have found in the church today is that many young people enter into marriage with no planning or preparation. Very rarely have young couples been encouraged to come to talk with their pastor before they get married. It is the pastor's fault for neglecting the importance of marriage preparation and premarital counseling.

To unite the couple as husband and wife, and to pronounce the blessing of God upon their union is a serious responsibility as well as a privilege. In defense of the Taiwanese ministers, the author could say that they have been reluctant to accept this responsibility mainly because of certain barriers and difficulties.

C. DIFFICULTIES CONFRONTING PREMARITAL COUNSELING IN TAIWANESE CHURCHES

Basically, the barriers and difficulties of doing premarital counseling are the same as for general counseling. To promote premarital counseling in Taiwan as in other counseling, every counselor must first know the virtues of one's own culture. Awareness is needed about the cultural barriers to counseling and about the basic and practical difficulties in doing it.

1. Cultural Barriers To Counseling:

Although the adaptation of a new social pattern will vary from person to person and from age group to age group, no Chinese can avoid making contact with modern culture. In the preceding chapters the transitional changes of the Chinese marriage and family from the traditional patterns to the modern ones were noted. However, once an individual has accepted an enduring system of values, he/she does not give them up very quickly. One may make adjustment

to modern ways in one's pattern of living. But that person may still retain some "traditional ideas" about authority, the means of expressing feeling, and the way in which one is to behave in public.

In other words, no one can be totally free from traditional-cultural pressures and influences. Particularly, when one's personal situation is threatened, even the young generation of Chinese would unconsciously or consciously shift to the "old pattern." This is an indication of the gap and conflict existing between the intellectual and the emotional levels held by many Chinese during the present transitional period of social change. Intellectually, many Chinese are looking for modern values. Yet, emotionally, they still remain in the domain of traditions.

Since the relationship between a cultural value and counseling is very close, the result of this gap and conflict between the "intellecture" and the "emotion", or between the "new pattern" and the "old pattern", has had a bad influence on counseling program in Taiwan. It is obvious that the more a counselee is subject to traditional influences, the more serious is this influence as a barrier in counseling. Several major cultural barrier to counseling are discussed as follows.

(1) For Eastern societies, including Taiwanese society, are often considered to have a shame culture.

Chinese do have a consciousness of guilt but the author sees shame as more primary than guilt as an incentive for behaving. Commonly, the shame culture effects the expression of feelings. The general attitude of the Chinese tends to oppose open expressions of emotions such as anger, aggression, and resentment. In Taiwan most children are taught to "control" their emotions, to "internalize" their feelings. It is not surprising then that adults find it difficult to express strong feelings such as love and hostility (particularly the negative feelings). It is very difficult for them to verbalize what they feel.

Generally speaking, there is very little understanding of the differentiation between how a person feels and acts. In this situation one's thoughts and feelings tend to be identified with one's act. Consequently, when the author asked a Chinese how he/she felt about something he/she has experienced, the person might say, "I went to" relating an incident instead of revealing an emotional reaction to the incident.

Individuals tend to tenaciously cover and hide their feelings. They fear the almost unknown experience of sharing. There is further resistance to learning how others feel toward oneself--and of reporting directly to another one's feelings. When asked how he/she felt about the way in which another expressed his/her feelings, the person replied, "I wished I could express myself as freely." A

Chinese counselor who lives in the same cultural pattern often has difficulty in helping people express their deeper feelings.

(2) In the shame culture, the personal relationships of many people have been governed by a style of communication, that is labeled "face" in Taiwan. "Face" must be saved both for self and for one's family. It is more important than frankness or openness. What people think of a person and one's family is of extreme importance. Bringing shame to one's family is far worse than bad behavior itself. Hence, embarrassing situations should be avoided, one's feelings should be well controlled.

It is traditional in Chinese culture not to speak unpleasant truths or discuss family affairs outside the family. As an old Chinese saying admonishes: "Keep your mouth shut to keep your family name good." Under such influence many Chinese would not seek the modern "counselor," who is an outsider, to talk about anything that disturbs them. Very often their very instinct is to conceal their problems and turn a brave and smiling face to the world. This attitude prevents the possibility of solving problems through consulting a counseling center or other professionals.

In former days when problems and conflicts arose among the Chinese people, how were they solved? Traditionally, relatives such as uncles or grandparents who have

authority and experience were sought first in the extended family. When the problems could not be solved within the family group, some husbands might seek the wise and respected older person in their own village. Most wives turned to gods, spirit mediums, and fortune tellers.

(3) In traditional families there have developed very clear, distinct lines and classes of authority which involve giving and receiving of orders, and holding superior-inferior feelings. Superiors feel it their duty to order, instruct, criticize, even embarrass, ridicule and punish the inferiors. The inferiors are out of place if they attempt to challenge, criticize or resist accepting all the orders from their superiors. Obedience and respect are required and given in the superior-inferior relationships.

Under such cultural influence, the counselor would have great difficulty in meeting with all members of a family (or even only both husband and wife). Father or husband, grandparents or parents-in-law, the key authority figures, usually do not attend counseling sessions. Even when these family members do attend counseling sessions, it would be inappropriate for a counselor to ask a family member directly, "Tell me how you feel about this." The family members would be offended by the counselor's "brutal frankness." The counselor should not expect them to talk openly and freely before one another (particularly in front of

those authoritative superiors).

A son/daughter is not accustomed to express negative feelings in the presence of parents (especially the father). He/she would not wish to contradict the parents, because this would cause the parents to lose face. A wife would not humiliate her husband before the children or risk offending the counselor by contradicting him/her. She would be expected to support her husband's opinion, or at least to restate it in a slightly different way. A father is accustomed to give orders to his children, especially to his daughters. He certainly does not express his feelings before his children, especially if some weakness or mistake on his part is implied. The father is always the spokesman in traditional family, he has authority. It is apparent that when a counselor tries to approach the family members on the basis of equality and openness, the counselor is faced with great difficulties.

(4) Since the emotional pattern of Chinese people is to respect superiors and authority, a counselor is regarded as an authority. Although the pattern of authority in a counseling situation is different from the pattern in family life, a client tends to respect the counselor as a superior. The client depends on the counselor for decision making. Samuel Southard has described this superiority of the counselor in the East from his own experience and field

study in Eastern Asian countries as follows:²⁰

The counselee tends to expect the counselor to be able to see through one's situation, advise, manipulate, and arrange properly. If the counselor does not do this, he/she is seen as an uncaring, unable superior. If the counselor's advice is good, he/she is respected. If something goes wrong, the counselor is held responsible.

This is the reverse of the American pattern of counseling. The trained American counselor listens more than advises. The object of the counseling is to help people to accept responsibility for decisions. Furthermore, in Taiwan the superior-inferior complex is deep, and counselees tend to respond in accordance with what they feel the superior counselor would like them to say. Or at least they will try to help to conclude the interview session most pleasantly in a way that makes the counselor feel comfortable. In this sense, an American and a Chinese would use the word "counseling" with different meanings.

Clearly, there is a barrier when the counselors apply the Western technique of emphasizing the non-directive or client-centered method. In a country where individuals' dependency on authority-superiority is great, the client-centered approach would not bring fruitful results. Samuel Southard also points out, "It would seem strange indeed to

²⁰Samuel Southard, Family Counseling in East Asia (Manila: New Day, 1969), p. 13.

be non-committal in countries where horoscopes, gods, spirit mediums, reincarnation, fate, and fortune telling affect many personal decisions."²¹

2. Basic Difficulties:

Besides the cultural barriers to Western styles of counseling in Taiwan, there are basic difficulties existing because many Christians and ministers have misunderstand what counseling really is.

In short, in earlier days, the movement of pastoral counseling was oriented to pastoral theology, while today it is centered in pastoral psychology. The impetus for the new movement has come from the laboratories of the psychological sciences rather than from the scholarship of theologians.²² Thus, the pastoral counseling of today is characterized as psychologically oriented pastoral care.

However, most likely, the majority of the pastors in Taiwan are conservative and have difficulties in receiving the new movement. There are many in Taiwan who puzzle over the adoption of pastoral counseling into their ministry and feel insecure in working in the field of psychologically oriented pastoral care. Therefore, this developmental

²¹Ibid., p. 7.

²²William E. Hulme, Counseling and Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1956), p. 2.

process of the new movement of counseling has created much more confusion, bewilderment, and even doubt about the validity of its existence in the Christian ministry in the minds of many Chinese ministers and theologians than was true in America about twenty-five years ago.

According to the author's understanding, there are at least two conceivable reasons for such a rejection and the insecurity of many Chinese ministers in accepting psychologically oriented counseling into their ministry.

One is the extreme position of the Rogerian orientation of a non-directive or client-centered approach by the ministers who pioneered the counseling movement in Taiwan about ten years ago. The influence of non-directive methods was profound among those pioneers who introduced counseling to Taiwan. As discussed before Chinese appear to be structure-oriented and non-verbal. It would seem the non-directive theory of counseling is not productive and effective. Bewilderment, rejection, insecurity, and resistance by many Chinese to the culturally irrelevant Rogerian method are its consequences.

The other reason which is more fundamental is the lack of a sound correlation of theology and psychology in the pioneer stages of the counseling movement in Taiwan. The author's judgement is based on personal experience in counseling training at the seminary and the Christian hospital in Taiwan. Consequently, counseling has been accused

of being a new device to promote modernism or the so-called social gospel.

Most Chinese ministers were prepared in rather small and fundamentalist seminaries, heavily oriented to biblical theology and biblical studies. The emphasis at these seminaries is that if the necessary biblical background is done and done well, a proper pastoral ministry will flow from the pastor's efforts. Due to this many Chinese ministers are unfamiliar with a true sense of pastoral counseling. They do not believe that counseling is biblical in principle and practice. They are afraid that counseling which emphasizes psychological perspectives may lead people astray instead of drawing them closer to God. Pastoral counseling is still viewed askance by many Chinese ministers. Some sincere Christian leaders even claimed that it is better not to include counseling in Christian work.

3. Practical Difficulties:

It is obvious that adequate pastoral premarital counseling is not being performed by Chinese pastors due to the cultural barriers and basic difficulties. However, there are other practical difficulties to be considered.

First, the author may state that Protestantism came to Taiwan with a general emphasis on individualism, and the family pattern was relatively ignored. Consequently, the Christian ministry in Taiwan placed its greatest concern on

personal and mass evangelism, and ministry to families was largely neglected. It is unfortunate that the Christian church in Taiwan could not form a new larger "family" in which the Chinese family could find care, support, acceptance, and in their minister a new "counselor." In fact, the new sense of individualism has made it increasingly difficult for pastors to relate to families as a unit rather than to individuals.

Secondly, the greatest of these practical difficulties are the Chinese ministers' lack of training in counseling theories and techniques, along with the claims on the pastor's time, energy, and sense of responsibility. It has been pointed out that the reason why most of the ministers in Taiwan have never encouraged or expected young people to come for premarital counseling is because of their lack of training in this field.²³ In the light of their limited experience and counseling skills, it is easy for most ministers to be hesitant to do premarital counseling. They say, "We just feel inadequate to counseling couples either before or after marriage." How can a minister tell a couple to come for premarital counseling without having had proper training? While the minister is rightly concerned with people's lack of preparation for marriage, the pastor

²³Southard, p. 48.

will also do well to consider his/her own preparation for such a task. Yet most Chinese ministers do lack training in the field, especially in clinical training under supervision which is an essential part of training for any counselor.

Another practical problem which is closely related to the lack of training is the lack of resources for effective premarital counseling. The need for literature on Christian counseling and its related subjects is as great as the need for clinical training. Through literature pastoral counselors and others will become aware of what counseling is and learn the opportunities for counseling. However, the only literature available in Chinese now is Howard Clinebell's Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling and William Hulme's The Pastoral Care of Families: Its Theology and Practice which are translations of Western culture and techniques. Literature in the field of pastoral counseling or related subjects originally written by Chinese authors has not been seen in Taiwan.

D. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PREMARITAL COUNSELING IN TAIWANESE CHURCHES

Most Chinese Christians have a close and intimate relationship with their pastor. Not only do they look up the pastor for help and guidance, but they expect the pastor to come and visit them often in their homes. When the

pastor has a high status with church members, they usually feel that the pastor can be consulted about personal problems. This is because the pastor has built a relationship that is similar to the "family kinship" or "family tie." Furthermore, because of their common Christian faith, church members regard the pastor as a superior member of the "sacred family." In general, for Chinese Christians the role of the pastor can be characterized as a "parental figure." Thus, the family-like intimacy between the pastor and Christians is very strong. This family-like intimacy is definitely very valuable in Chinese society. It increases the opportunity for the Chinese minister to be a wise and capable counselor in the big "church-family."

Although there are barriers and difficulties still existing in counseling, the pastor is the only professional person outside the family who could be brought into family problems by Chinese Christians. In contrast to this many Chinese have strong feelings against psychiatrists or other counselors. They consider medical doctors to be too busy to offer counseling. These professionals are generally looked upon as "outsiders."

There are a number of missionaries who love Chinese, and most of them have some training in counseling. However, most of the missionaries have faced the following major handicaps in ministering to the Chinese. The cultural barriers to counseling which exist for Chinese counselors are

even more difficult for missionaries. This is true even when they have lived in Taiwan for ten years or more.

First, in order to communicate effectively with Chinese clients, missionaries must be able to understand the verbal and non-verbal language of Chinese. At best a missionary could hardly learn to understand these in less than ten years. And for many it is never acquired. There is difficulty in understanding idioms, context, and insinuations. When emotions are being expressed in a tonal language, there are difficulties even for those who have grown up with that language.

Secondly, since language is a part of culture, failure to understand another's language is failure to comprehend much of another's culture. When missionaries lack knowledge of Chinese culture it is very difficult for them to gain confidence in counseling Chinese clients. A missionary may have taken a great deal of time, energy, and care to counseling a Chinese client, yet the result may not be effective or productive.

Finally, it is a matter of common experience that individuals find it more difficult to establish intimate relationships with those unlike themselves. Differences in cultural backgrounds, value systems, and life patterns create difficulties in establishing a counseling relationship. In Taiwan, these differences may result in missionaries lacking a "family-like" intimacy with the Chinese people.

Usually, Chinese people would be reluctant to share much with one these considered "outsiders," although they are respected.

In the survey findings only 2.4 percent of the total 145 respondents indicated they would expect premarital counseling from a missionary. Only 13.5 percent of the sample would have premarital counseling from the Christian Counseling Center of Taipei. However, 82.7 percent of the sample indicated that they expected premarital counseling from their pastors. It shows that pastors would be the most approachable professional persons sought out for premarital counseling. In other words, young people expect their pastors to be the most knowledgeable and well-informed on this subject in the community. In this situation, the premarital counseling program can best be accomplished by suitably trained Chinese pastors who are personally familiar with the cultural attitudes of the community concerned and who have "family-like" intimacy with the local people.

Perhaps a minister with limited training in premarital counseling will still feel that he/she is inadequate in counseling with young people. However, the one thing which is more important than counseling knowledge and skill is the minister's personality expressed in Christian love. It is not necessary to agree with the concept that effective counseling is seventy-five percent love and twenty-five percent technical knowledge. Yet if the pastor has a

real love for people and a sincere desire to help couples build a happy and creative marriage, couples will respond eagerly and appreciatively. The minister has the advantage of a loving personality and the uniqueness of a close and deep relationship with people which other professionals do not have.

The author believes that the premarital counseling movement will grow in Taiwan. It must grow, because there is an ever-increasing number of young people who turning to the church for guidance. They are hungry for correct information. It can be predicted that when its program conforms to Chinese philosophy, social custom, and remaining traditions, more and more young adults will be eager to use such opportunities as they prepare for marriage.

Of course, there will still be those who resist premarital counseling. Others may criticize the ministers for conducting it in Taiwan. Nevertheless, ministers should consistently and patiently teach young Christians the value of premarital counseling. One great advantage that pastors have is the opportunity to educate the young and re-educate the old through many facets of church life.

The church of Taiwan should not hesitate to introduce a program of premarital counseling when they are conscious of the needs and of the opportunities it offers. Neither the basic nor the practical difficulties are unsolvable. Only if church leaders face the difficulties

frankly and overcome them by conviction and dedication, will premarital counseling program progress effectively and with the right attitudes in the near future. Resulting from this concern some constructive suggestions for promoting the program are presented in next chapter.

CHAPTER V

HOW TO PROMOTE A PASTORAL PREMARITAL
COUNSELING PROGRAM IN TAIWAN

A. METHODS FOR PROMOTING THE PROGRAM

1. Providing Training:

Since pastoral care and counseling for marriage and the family demand professional skill, training and competence are required in communication, psycho-social relationships, and group leadership. To depend only on spiritual power through prayer and fixed standard advice will not be sufficient. The ministers must acquire the necessary skills to meet the needs of the people. They must revitalize their thinking and bring their knowledge about new methods and new techniques up-to-date. Rollo May points out that a good counselor is made, not born; training is essential.¹

In the light of understanding of the qualifications required and of the needs of the churches for pastoral counseling (particularly in the area of premarital, or marriage-family counseling), a few suggestions concerning training programs are given as follows:

¹Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1949), p. 165.

(1) The theological seminaries in Taiwan have the primary responsibility of providing the ministers with fundamental knowledge and skill in order that they may help those with problems connected with marriage and family life. Courses on counseling and related subjects should be included in the curriculum of seminaries. Several guidelines related to the counseling ministry, for which theological schools should prepare their students as pastoral counselors, are noted. Provision of an appropriate training program with these goals by theological schools in Taiwan is essential and urgent.

(a) Every minister needs to be educated so that he or she can deal with the theological dimensions of the problems in counseling situations. For doing premarital counseling the minister must be equipped with a comprehensive knowledge of the theological implications of marriage and family life.

(b) Every minister needs to be equipped with knowledge and skills in terms of a preventive ministry in the areas of family mental health. In other words, it is wise to develop a network of marriage-family enrichment programs which will sustain the growth of individuals.

(c) Every minister needs to be equipped with the skills of pastoral counseling, particularly those pertaining to premarriage, marriage, and family life.

(d) Every minister needs to be equipped with the

skill of referral whereby one can cooperate with the other resource personnel in the community.

(e) Every minister needs to be equipped with the skill to train and utilize lay people for ministering to young Christians concerning marriage and family life.

(2) Because theological education in Taiwan has failed to give present pastors adequate preparation in counseling, it is crucial that theological seminaries provide a program of continuing education in this field. It would be most helpful in enabling those ministers to catch up with the new frontier in pastoral counseling. Such in-service training would be the most effective and relevant way to meet the present increasing demand for training.

Since pastoral counseling is a new field of service for most Chinese ministers, it would be good for them to understand before they enroll in continuing education that pastoral counseling (particularly premarital counseling) is a service which will bring to the pastors such rewards that they will never regret the time or money spent in preparing for it. Many ministers are more receptive to learning experiences in counseling after they have been in the ministry than they were as seminarians. They are motivated to learn what they desperately need to know. It is an encouraging scene that despite the lack of training in pastoral counseling during their previous seminary education, Chinese ministers are seeking opportunities for better and

more creative equipping themselves in their profession. Many of them would appreciate some forms of continuing education in the field of pastoral counseling.

Various forms of continuing education may be provided in the area of the young adults' interest concerning marriage and family. Usually, workshops or seminars may be provided by a theological seminary for local pastors. Such workshops or seminars may be held by a local church, or in a district gathering, or even at the time of a presbytery meeting. Speakers and leaders from the seminary, other institutions and allied professions may be invited to help teach the principles and techniques of pastoral counseling.

Those missionaries in Taiwan who have had training and experience in the field of pastoral counseling may be invited also. They will be of great help in a training program and may be consulted when a definite plan for premarital counseling in the local church is being worked out. Another form of continuing education is case consultation. This may be carried on for local ministers on a weekly basis at a Christian counseling center.

(3) Realizing the need for specialists in the field among ministers in Taiwan, advanced programs for training need to be provided. Such training should not only be provided in theological schools but at the graduate level in universities. Similar programs may be developed at community mental health centers and at the counselling

center. Training programs may be developed through the help, cooperation, and the joint effort of the seminary, the counseling center, and other institutions. The author hopes that in the near future, we can establish the first Institute for Pastoral Training in Taiwan, where advanced programs can be provided. Several purposes of the Institute would be:

- (a) To help to promote pastoral counseling among local pastors.
- (b) To assist in designing counseling courses at seminaries.
- (c) To cooperate with Christian hospitals in providing clinical pastoral education.
- (d) To provide leadership training in the field of pastoral counseling.
- (e) To help in setting up new counseling centers.

.....

(4) Seminary education in Taiwan has not trained ministers to interpret Christianity in their cultural context. In most cases the content and format of theological training are transferred directly from the West without being modified to fit the local society.

The author realizes that further growth of pastoral counseling in Taiwan depends largely upon the establishment of identity and the organization of methodology applicable to the local situation and the needs of the Chinese people. In other words, to effectively exercise professional skills

of counseling in Taiwan, the counselor needs specific knowledge and understanding of the cultural background and social structure of Taiwan.

It is true that in the past few years Taiwan has been developing, though in somewhat different form and degree, the complex marital and family problems which are quite common in any industrialized and urbanized society. Taiwan needs skills similar to those used in the West in ministering to those with marital and family problems. Ultimately, Taiwan is required to develop training programs for professionals similar to those in the West. However, these efforts should be distinctive enough to meet the particular needs of the Chinese people. Taiwan needs to develop its own counselors by gaining insights from the West and at the same time avoiding factors irrelevant to its culture. Thus, the author is greatly concerned with the importance of the training program in Taiwan to be re-examined in its theology, philosophy, and methodology, to test whether or not it is relevant to indigenous needs.

(5) Since there has been a lack of counseling training in Taiwan, there is a lack of leadership in the field. In fact, there is no one Chinese minister serving in Taiwan who has a doctoral degree in pastoral counseling. There are some in other fields. For the ministry of pastoral counseling to be firmly established in Taiwan, a nucleus of ministers need to be trained who would then help promote

the program. It is urgent in the first stage of the counseling movement that the church should have vision to enlist and train such leaders.

For this concern, it is the author's final but not least important suggestion that opportunities be provided for present pastoral counselors to receive specialized training in the United States. In this way capable, well-trained, and independent leadership be produced. As a result the lack of advanced training programs and leadership for pastoral counseling will be solved over a period of time.

Needless to say, the author and other prospective leaders may accept some American techniques and theories in counseling, but this does not necessitate identifying with the American cultural assumptions of "the best techniques and theories." As Samuel Southard says, "Counseling principles and practices must grow out of information concerning their own culture and be shared through dialogue with the people who can best use it."² It would be a great challenge for the author and other prospective leaders who have studied in America to go home to translate what they have learned from the West while developing their own theory and practice. They should develop theory and practice in

²Samuel Southard, "Pastoral Counseling in East Asia," Pastoral Psychology, XXI: 202 (March 1970), 48.

accordance with the appropriate combination of Eastern knowledge and Western techniques. Hopefully, in this manner they will find the best ways for helping the pastoral counseling ministry in Taiwan to become more effective and productive in their own culture.

2. Publishing Literature:

Literature is closely related to practical training for pastoral counseling. It plays an important part in promoting counseling. Particularly, in premarital counseling it would help to have literature on related subjects which the ministers and young couples profit from reading. In the burgeoning new field of premarital counseling, sound and comprehensive literature is needed to help ministers in developing better working tools as pastoral counselors. Such literature can also serve as a productive means of educating the young people and re-educating the old.

As has been noted in an earlier section, literature pertaining to the field of pastoral counseling in Taiwan is very limited. Most of the literature now available in Taiwan is a translation of Western techniques. While Western literature has much to offer, the demand for indigenous literature must be met. Each country and culture has eventually to develop its own counseling methodology and counselors. This is only accomplished through the appearance and the use of indigenous literature.

The author earnestly wants to serve the churches in Taiwan upon the completion of studies in America. It is the desire and responsibility of the author to be of help in the translation of more leading Western literature. However, it is more urgent for the author to produce original writings in his own cultural context.

3. Promoting The Program To Local Churches:

Infact, the role of helping troubled couples and families is not new in Chinese history. As has been noted before, when a Chinese is in distress, any superior person who is identified with the extended family could be a "counselor." When problems go beyond husband and wife, there are parents and uncles who will assume authority as "counselor." In the extended family, it is assumed that an older relative should be ready to help in any way. In the nuclear family there are more decisions to make, but no close family members to "advise." What will people do under these conditions?

As the cohesive system of the traditional Chinese family is being changed by the development of the nuclear family, a different type of "wise counselors" with scientific knowledge and special training has begun to receive attention by the Chinese. Receptivity of the professional counselors is not great but has been considerable regarding the cultural barriers and difficulties. Being aware of the

effective function and the receptivity of counseling, a few Chinese ministers are becoming interested in studying the new knowledge of pastoral counseling. The growth of interest in a specialized skill for counseling those with marital and family problems is increasingly recognized among these ministers. (Naturally, there are still many Chinese ministers who reject to accept counseling into their ministry.) A result of that was to set up the first Christian Counseling Center in Taipei 1973.

It is necessary to have some professional counselors in Taiwan. As a counselor of the Taipei Christian Counseling Center, the author is encouraged by the work and the result that the Center has accomplished. Nevertheless, the author realizes that this kind of highly specialized counseling service touches only a small fraction of the vast multitude of the Chinese people who need help. To have only the one counseling center which was set up in the largest city of Taiwan four years ago is surely not sufficient. There is an incessant call for setting up more counseling centers in other cities of Taiwan to meet the changing needs of society.

However, it is important for the churches to examine the long-range plans for a counseling ministry. Pastoral counseling, particularly premarital counseling must be advocated and promoted in the local churches. The Chinese churches could not begin to meet the needs for counseling

until the churches train pastors on a large scale to do the job. In looking toward the future it is more urgent and important to give pastors a basic training in counseling than to devote effort to the training of only a few professional specialists.

Having evaluated the importance of promoting pastoral counseling in the local churches, some guidelines for helping a minister to work out the premarital counseling project are now given.

(1) It may take a long time to extend the counseling program from the counseling center to the local church. If pastoral counseling is to be introduced into the church it should not be introduced with a sudden zeal and program. It must be introduced slowly, steadily, and thoroughly. The advance of the counseling program will be fruitful only if there is careful education of the Christians and there is gradual cultivation and development of the counselors. For this purpose, parish ministers must first receive training through continuing education and parishioners must also be educated to an understanding of what pastoral counseling really is.

(2) Today, the Chinese pastors face a new challenge: The time has come when every person planning marriage should have the opportunity for premarital counseling by pastors or by lay people who are well prepared in this field. To meet this challenge the minister must always be

aware of the needs of young people and give them help. During the beginning period of the counseling movement in Taiwan, it would be unrealistic for a minister to just sit there and wait for young people to request premarital counseling. The minister must promote the premarital counseling service by making an effort to present constructive steps toward it.

The parishioners need to understand the minister's role if the minister expects the premarital counseling program to be effective. A good place to achieve such a purpose would be in sermon materials. However, the minister's behavior in everyday relationships usually speaks louder than words in a sermon. If the minister is non-judgmental, sincere, and friendly as he/she interacts with the young people in the church, confidence and approachability for premarital counseling will be built.

For a period of time, most of the Chinese couples the minister counsels will come at the minister's insistence rather than on their own initiative. However, if such ministers are well equipped in counseling theory and practice they will be providing a needed and welcomed premarital service for the young Christians. When the productive result of such premarital counseling has been known, more young people who have reached the point of declaring for marriage will come willingly and appreciatively to the minister. It can be anticipated that later our young people

will come for premarital counseling on their own initiative.

(3) Preparation for marriage should not wait until young people come to consult about the wedding ceremony. Ideally, a program of marriage preparation should begin with a person's birth, or even when their parents conceive.³ One's family relationship is the fundamental preparation for marriage. But the family relationship, even at its best, needs to be supplemented by outside agencies, particularly by the loving fellowship of the church. If the family fails in teaching healthy human relationships, the church can supply the need.

Therefore, the church should give special attention to long-range marriage education program. The church in its regular activities should include a growth-oriented marriage preparation program. Concerning this part of the program, Clinebell suggests:⁴

This plan should be discussed with the church's lay leaders, both women and men, to get their feedback and support. It can then be shared with the congregation through bulletins or newsletters at least twice a year. Thus the plan becomes generally known in the parish.

The program may includes courses of instruction and

³Roy L. Burkhart, "A Program of Premarital Counseling," Pastoral Psychology, I: 25 (October 1950), 25.

⁴Howard J. Clinebell, Growth Counseling for Marriage Enrichment (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p.48.

group discussion of young single adults on the subjects of love, courtship, Christian marriage. Evidently, the goal of a premarital education-growth program is to train and help young people for marriage before the premarital counseling take place.

(4) During the time of premarital education, the minister has the best opportunity to explain the importance of premarital counseling. From time to time the minister may guide the young people in coming to a realization that every person has his/her own problem and so does every marriage and family. It is quite normal to have problems; as a matter of fact it is often a good thing. Indeed it is healthy, because it reveals where changes and adjustments have to be made. Therefore, if the problem is resolved properly and constructively the person has grown and the marriage has been strengthened as a result.

A minister must teach young people in the church to come with their problems to talk with him/her. It is more important that in every possible way the minister bring young people to an awareness that premarital counseling is not devised specifically for persons with problems. Premarital counseling is a means of enhancing the wedding and having the marriage begin on the highest possible level. The minister should convey this concept to the young people and have it widely accepted by them. If he/she is successful in this, the minister's role as a premarital counselor

will be more effective.

(5) Teaching young people to accept the idea of premarital counseling will help greatly in their acceptance of it when their need comes. One can count on each person yearning for a happy marriage. In all premarriage education programs, pastors help the young people realize that when they apply to be married in the church they are asking for the blessing of the church and expressing their willingness to accept the responsibilities which accompany their sacred vows. Therefore, when an engaged couple contacts the pastor to schedule the date of the wedding, the pastor will demand for an additional date for premarital counseling.

Premarital counseling may range from an hour's interview on the day before the ceremony to a series of interviews beginning several weeks prior to the wedding. However, a pastor cannot most effectively discharge the basic premarital counseling responsibility with a couple in only one conference, no matter how good the conference may be. Because of this fact a pastor should make it known throughout the parish that the pastor requires advance notice of weddings.

It is the author's hope that Chinese ministers will soon make a personal commitment not to perform a wedding service unless the couple has participated in a premarital counseling program. Hopefully, this will begin from two to six months prior to the wedding date so that ample time is

allowed for a complete program of effective premarital counseling.

(6) The following ways would be very effective in encouraging engaged couples to come to have premarital counseling:

(a) Printing the announcement in the church bulletin or newsletter regularly. The announcement would be like this:

Couples desiring to be married in this church are asked to get in touch with the minister at least two months prior to the date of the wedding. The members of this congregation expect that every couple have an opportunity for premarital counseling as an aid in experiencing a creative Christian marriage.

(b) Inviting the engaged couple to have dinner with the minister. It is very important for the minister to get well acquainted with the couple who are going to be married in the church. A friendly relationship between the couple and the minister will very possibly help develop a premarital counseling relationship.

(c) Designing a counseling card to be put in a particular place. If a engaged couple wants to counseling with the pastor they can fill out the application card. The pastor should contact the couple as soon as he/she receives the card.

(7) The minister should be the guiding light in the church, but the pastor does not have to be the expert in all phases of the premarital counseling program. Pastors

have their own limitations in terms of time and training. It would be effective if well-equipped lay people or other professionals in the community are involved in the program. An ideal situation would be to have several churches plan such a joint program for engaged couples. They can arrange the program twice each year, perhaps once in the spring and the other time in the fall.

4. Emphasizing An Approach Applicable To Taiwan:

There are social and cultural involvements in counseling. What is effective in one culture does not necessarily mean that it works the same in other cultures. Truly, "Every culture has its clients and its counselors, its troubled people and its pastors."⁵ Wayne Oates has aptly stated the necessity for the counselor to be conditioned by the cultural frame of reference of its people. He says,⁶

Therefore, one's pastoral role is conditioned by his whereabouts, and the pastor must be as versatile in his approaches to different cultural groups as was Paul in dealing with people of such vast cultural differences as existed between the Galatians and Corinthians.

Practically, the Rogerian approach of non-directive counseling is not applicable in Taiwan. Nevertheless, the

⁵Samuel Southard, Family Counseling in East Asia (Manila: New Day, 1969), p. 9.

⁶Wayne E. Oates, The Christian Pastor (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 153.

emphasis on the permissive, feeling oriented, insight-seeking approaches such as Rogerian can still serve a useful purpose. In the early stages of the counseling movement in Taiwan, this emphasis can be salutary in some of its effects. For the present situation the Rogerian approach is needed to rescue pastoral counseling from its legacy of shallow advice-giving and over-directiveness. Such an approach is particularly needed by the Chinese ministers to teach them to listen to feelings as well as to the words that the client is using. This approach can be a starting point in training pastors how to listen and respond to what people are experiencing. However, it is only a good starting point, not an adequate ending point in the context of Chinese culture.

On the one hand, the author has been convinced that the non-directive orientation does not provide an applicable theoretical base for the Chinese minister's total counseling ministry. As has been discussed in a previous section, with Chinese people a non-directive approach is limited and not practical in many cases. In Taiwan people still expect some sort of advice-giving from the counselor. The counselor should be wise not to convey at first the unwillingness of giving some direction. This does not mean that the counselor would ever be justified in adopting a dictatorial figure.

On the other hand, the author is aware of the young

adults' increasing challenge to authoritative advice which is a counselor-centered approach. Therefore, in pastoral counseling with Chinese (particularly with young people) there is a need to demonstrate another effective approach to relate and communicate. The justification for such an approach should be based neither on the "counselor's authority" nor on the "counselee's directiveness." It is based on the counseling relationship in which the counselor's resources can be used fully and appropriately.

Such an approach expects the pastor to change the model of communication from authority-centered to relationship-centered. This change of communication model could involve innovative and creative ways of enhancing both the counseling relationship and facilitating the communicating of needed information. In the atmosphere of a relationship-centered approach the young couple come for premarital counseling is more able to explore the significance of their relationships with the pastor as well as within themselves. It is also flexible enough to give specific care to the needs of each couple accordingly.

Such an approach makes constructive use of the pastor's authority and capability. It gives key importance to supportive methods in counseling. This allows the counselor to reflect on what is being done and find ways to do it more effectively. This approach, which may be defined as a supportive approach, will be applicable to Chinese society.

In essence, the supportive approach to counseling can be expected to be effective with the older generation in Taiwan. It would also be effective even with the young generation in premarital counseling when it is modified according to the situation and implemented by the close and friendly relationship between the pastor and the young people.

Based on Franz Alexander's idea of the essence of supportive psychotherapy,⁷ the author considers the following guidelines are important for Chinese pastoral counselors in applying the method of supportive approach. The last two points are particularly emphasized by Clinebell as indispensable in pastoral counseling situation.⁸

- (1) gratifying dependency needs,
- (2) supporting and guiding an emotional catharsis,
- (3) reviewing the problem situation objectively,
- (4) respecting and aiding the person's defenses,
- (5) helping the counselee experience changed life situations,
- (6) initiating action therapy, and
- (7) using religious resources.

⁷Franz Alexander, Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy (New York: Norton, 1966), pp. 155-156.

⁸Howard J. Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), pp. 141-142.

Some words of caution should be noted about using this supportive approach. There is danger that its relationships may be used as "crutches," in the negative connotations of the word, blocking growth by increasing dependency. This occurs when a minister does things for a counselee when the counselee could do for him-/herself, thus, avoiding the exercise of the coping "muscles" which alone would produce growth.⁹ With this concern in mind, the author desires to close this section with a few remarks based on his personal experience and evaluation.

First, the author realizes that there is no absolute answer to the question: "How direct should a Chinese counselor be?" The closest answer we can come to is to say that a counselor must be appropriate. The amount of direction the counselor will give will vary with each individual with the authority imposed by the local culture and the way the couple concerned communicate with each other. The directive or non-directive approach in counseling has to be modified for the benefit of all the people who are involved.

The matter of choosing a particular approach and method must depend in each case on the personality involved and must be judged according to the needs existing in the counseling relationship. The successful counselor must be

⁹Ibid., p. 151.

competent in a combination of therapeutic parameters and be flexible enough to meet the emerging therapeutic situation.¹⁰

B. BASING THE PROGRAM ON THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL PERSPECTIVES

The author is aware that the counseling movement in its pioneer stage in Taiwan has lacked a sound correlation of theology and psychology. Moreover, a conflicting situation exists in Taiwan between the two groups of theologians and psychologists. In this section an attempt is made to discuss some of the theological and pastoral implications of Christian counseling in general. This discussion will reveal the author's concern that counseling programs in Taiwanese churches must be based on theological and pastoral perspectives.

1. Integration Of Theology And Psychology:

Having gone their separate ways, religion and psychology separated their areas of interest, contending that they had different subject matter. However, the search for and the application of principles by the best theologians is not essentially different from the approach of the best thinkers in psychological science. The theologian may be as

¹⁰Alexander, p. 149.

scientific as the psychologist or other social scientists can be.

In reality, theology and psychology are siblings of the same basic search, with some similarities. They are closely correlated and therefore there is some overlapping and some mutual fulfillment in the ministry of healing. Both are concerned with a way of living, and searching for ever deeper insights, and moving toward self-mutual fulfillment. Eduard Thurneysen has been careful to distinguish between pastoral counseling and the various forms of secular counseling. But he does see the correlation of the two and then goes on to state that,¹¹

It would be of greatest significance if we not only made use of psychology as members of the church, but if psychology were also to be fertilized by the knowledge of living faith in the church. The knowledge of men in psychology could immeasurably gain from the understanding of men in the Bible.

Thurneysen's statement implies on the one hand that it is necessary for Chinese psychologists to understand and recognize the spiritual side of human beings. On the other hand, psychology's growing knowledge of human nature contributes to Christianity rather than threatening it. Theology must take psychology seriously and not deny the contributions that psychology has made to it. The real threat

¹¹Eduard Thurneysen, A Theology of Pastoral Care (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), pp. 107 & 210.

to Christianity is not psychology or other sciences, but the misunderstanding which leads Christianity to be alienated from other sciences. Theology should ally itself with all sciences of good will and encourage the use of new knowledge for the benefit of mankind.

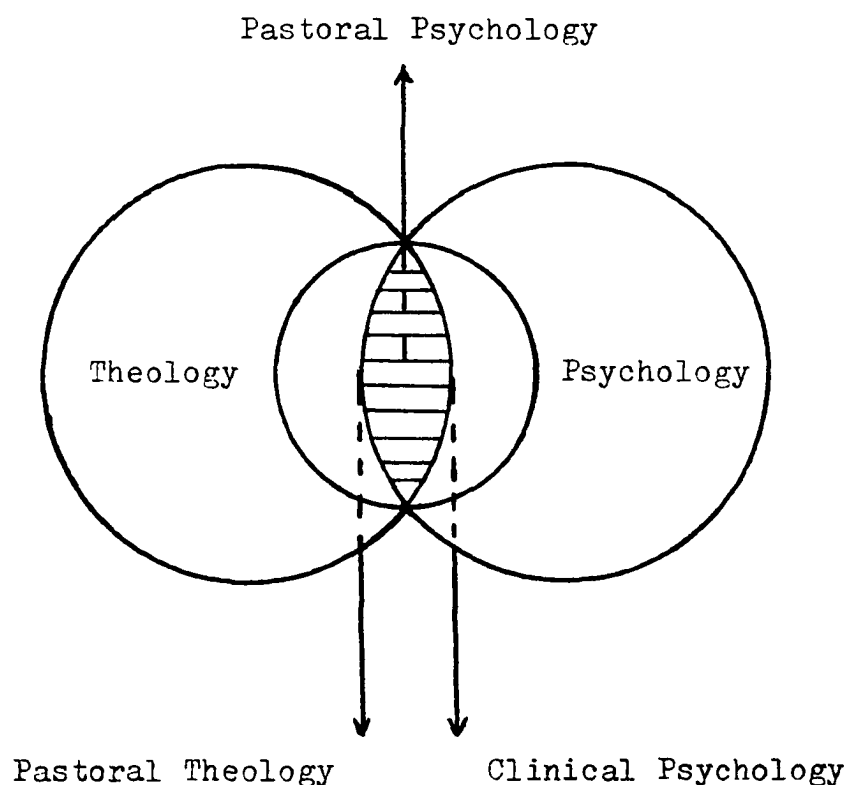
In viewing the conflicts between the psychologists and theologians in Taiwan, the author appreciates William Hulme's apt observation about the similar situation in the American church. Twenty years ago he said:¹²

I believe the time has come in the rise of pastoral counseling when this conflict must be faced and some attempt made to solve it. Otherwise the growing interest in the new movement may reach a point where because of this conflict it can go no further. It is even possible that the movement itself may become an issue of discussion within the church rather than the means for unity which I am convinced it can be.

Various attempts to bridge the two, theology and psychology, have been made in America particularly in the last two decades. Evidently, these attempts have been very successful in America. The new field of Pastoral Psychology is a result of the study of the integration of theology and psychology. The following Diagram 1 is the author's attempt to summarize this integration of the two subjects.

¹²William E. Hulme, Counseling and Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1956), p. 6.

(Diagram - 1)



There are distinguished psychologically oriented theologians and pastoral counselors, such as Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr, Seward Hiltner, Wayne Oates, and Howard Clinebell, to name only a few. Their attempts have been successful to a great extent as is indicated in the contemporary picture of what Clinebell calls the "renaissance period" in pastoral care. This period is marked by the burgeoning of literature in the field, the strengthening of seminary education in pastoral counseling, the increasing

impact of clinical pastoral education, the development of lay ministers of pastoral care, the proliferation of small personal growth groups in the ministry, and the mushrooming of many church-related counseling services in America.¹³

The movement of pastoral counseling in Taiwan is still in the infant stage, very similar to the early stage of the movement in the United States. Further developments remain to be seen. The various signs of a new renaissance period of counseling in America are very encouraging for Chinese ministers who are called to promote this ministry in Taiwan.

2. Joint Efforts Of Theology And Psychology:

Chinese ministers are now faced by the new challenge of dealing with troubled people in modern times. Today, the pastor's task is not something which can be carried out in isolation. In this age the pastoral counselor is challenged to be competent as a professional in pastoral care, with an integrity of theological and psychological orientation, rather than emphasizing one side and neglecting the other.

Naturally, the various professions which do some type of counseling have some things in common. Yet there is

¹³Clinebell, Basic Types, p. 16.

in each profession specialized knowledge different from the other. These differences are essential so that the members of each profession may function properly in helping those who are referred to them. In the healing ministry we need more competent counselors in every profession; each needs to be aware of the importance of the others. In the counseling ministry it is even more important to have increasing mutual cooperation from the different professions in order to form a more effective healing team.

It has been recognized that both the ministers and psychologists are engaged in reducing human suffering and increasing happiness. They are never enemies and indeed they share a similar task and goal as they face human problems. It is time for the Chinese ministers and the psychologists to join efforts in the great task of healing. The cardinal need in Taiwan is to develop an environment in which men and women, clergy and lay people, ministers and scientists truly cooperate in joint efforts to heal those who are wounded in the struggle rather than being antagonistic. The author believes this can come when both church and the secular organization develop trust, wisdom, and cooperation through shared experience and leadership. They can then work together for stabilizing marriage and family life in the changing society of Taiwan.

It is hoped that in the near future there will be a trend in Taiwan for establishing a cooperative relationship

between theology and psychology. It is commendable and possible to bring theologians/pastors and psychologists/psychiatrists into such a cooperative relationship in Taiwan. In the recognition of some areas of mutual concern and professional overlap between these two groups, there are several areas at which they can meet in cooperation. These areas are:

- (1) Cooperation in referral.
- (2) Cooperation in consultation.
- (3) Cooperation in treatment.
- (4) Cooperation in training.
- (5) Cooperation in community education projects such as sex education, mental health, etc.

To make the inter-professional cooperation be possible and to increase the cooperation effectively, we should first identify the following needs.

- (1) The need for training program of pastoral counselors to be geared not only toward enhancing their counseling skills but also providing them with skills and knowledge to collaborate with mental health professionals
- (2) The need for education and training of mental health professionals in understanding of the role and function of the clergy and Christian institutions, and how to collaborate with them.
- (3) The need for establishing clear-open dialogue between these two professional groups so that effective means of collaboration can be accomplished.

Basically, in view of the present situation in

Taiwan, to establish clear-open dialogue between these two groups is the most crucial and urgent need to be met. The primary task of the dialogue is to avoid errors of the past, to penetrate barriers of present ignorance, and to have an active cooperation of the two groups. If there is real dialogue between both groups, misunderstanding and disagreement concerning each other's field will be eliminated. Even though the tension of controversy between these two groups is serious in Taiwan, the solution of it is not possible without dialogue. Only through this dialogue can the desire to learn and to join efforts be increased among both groups in the near future. Eventually, this will result in a co-operation also in writings.

Growth and development of such a cooperative relationship through open dialogue between pastors and mental health professionals is possible, and yet it has not taken place in Taiwan so far. The author regards the following practical ways can be proposed to bring about such dialogue in Taiwan.

(1) Since several largest Christian hospitals in Taiwan have recently established chaplaincies, the place to start advocating such dialogue will be in these institutions. It will be easier to establish the dialogue through staff meetings and case conferences in these hospitals. The chaplains will be the key persons in establishing such a dialogue. If the chaplains can work closely with one or two

particular psychologists/psychiatrists who are Christians, the dialogue will be most creative.

(2) There are two psychiatrists who are consultants of the Taipei Christian Counseling Center. The Center has occasionally referred its clients to them but has never invited them to consult at the Center's case conferences. It will be very beneficial for the dialogue if they are invited to the case conference regularly. One of the consultants is the director of the Psychiatric Department of the Taiwan University Hospital in Taipei. It is hoped that the Christian counselors of the Center would sometimes be invited to the Psychiatric Department sharing their experiences.

(3) The Christian Academy in Taiwan has been very active and successful in facilitating dialogue, studies, and social actions among different institutions. It will be most effective if the Christian Academy would coordinate and facilitate the dialogue through seminars, panel discussions between the two groups.

3. Inner Relationship Of Pastoral Counseling And Theology:

It is true that to some extent pastoral counseling is the result of the study of psychology and sociology. Yet neither psychology nor sociology is a substitute for the Christian gospel. Ultimately, they are merely means or aids to a more effective presentation of the Christian message. In other words, no matter how much Christian ministers have

a knowledge of psychology and sociology, pastoral counseling must always be justified theologically.

Fundamentally, one is called a pastoral counselor because of one's role as the shepherd of the parishioners, one's theological perspective, and one's spiritual resource. Therefore, pastoral counseling must demonstrate in a convincing way that it has a significant theological basis and valid religious resources. For this reason theological education is indispensable in training pastoral counselors. It is sad that some pastors feel that theology is irrelevant to pastoral counseling. They say that they want practical rather than theoretical instruction. They only want to know how to do counseling, how to handle people who present problems. They feel that counseling that works does not need to be justified theologically.

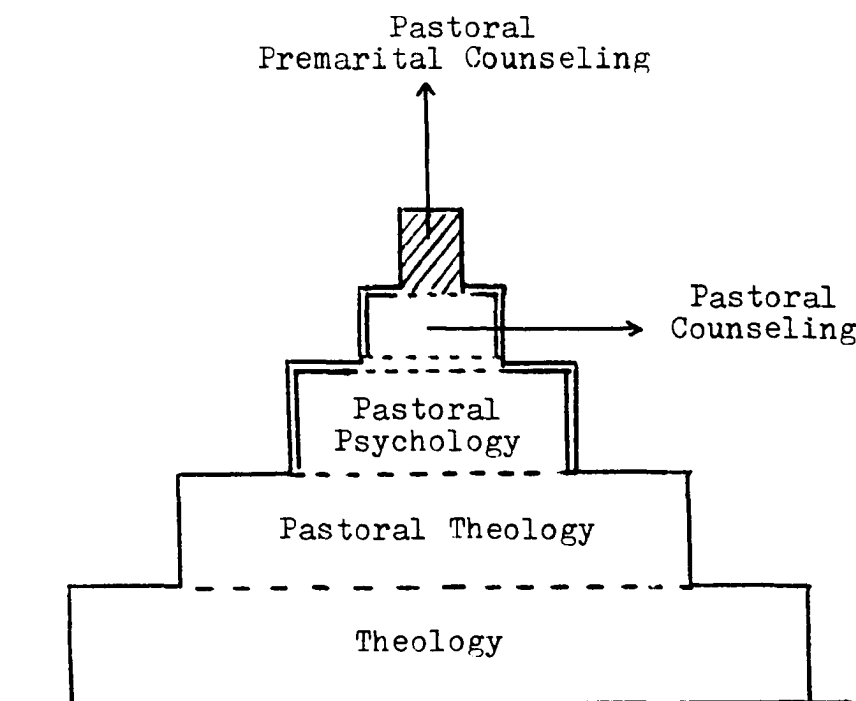
Pastoral counseling cannot be understood by studying only its techniques. In fact, theology and pastoral counseling interpenetrate each other. As Edward Thornton states, "The relationship between theology and pastoral counseling is neither contradictory nor paradoxical. They exist in correlation rather than separation."¹⁴ Pastoral counseling raises questions that require theological answers, and theology is enhanced when it is subject to the

¹⁴Edward E. Thornton, Theology and Pastoral Counseling (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 25.

scrutiny of these same questions. Theology is the theory behind pastoral counseling and a reflection on pastoral functioning. Theology is essential in pastoral counseling if it is pastoral. "At best," Thornton says, "pastoral counseling is interpreted as an application of theology."¹⁵

The foundation of pastoral counseling is theology and the inner relationship between the two is summarized and illustrated in Diagram 2.

(Diagram - 2)



¹⁵Ibid., p. 15.

4. The Unique Role Of Pastoral Counselors:

To establish one's own identity as a pastoral counselor is not an easy task. This difficulty is related to the confusion as to the nature, purpose, and function of pastoral care. Many pastors are struggling with this at the present time. In order that the Christian message can be incorporated in the most effective manner, the minister must first understand his/her role as a pastoral counselor, how Christians perceive it and how the minister perceives it as related to him-/herself. It is the purpose of this section to examine the unique role of the minister as a counselor and see how this role contributes to the effective relationship with those couples whom the pastor counsels.

Basically, pastoral counseling is still a type of counseling. It has much in common with other types of counseling. Yet, it always has certain unique dimensions which clearly differentiate. The fact that the work of counseling by a pastor is quite similar to that of a secular counselor will not eliminate the uniqueness of the pastor's role. A pastor cannot and should not equate one's work as a counselor with that of other professions, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, social workers, etc. If the minister is to function as a counselor in a proper perspective, he/she should realize that pastoral counseling is

neither psychotherapy nor social casework. The pastoral counselor must recognize one's unique role and distinguish it from that of other counseling professions.

The minister within the Christian faith has a unique message and function. This function differs from the purely secular counselor. Pastoral counseling should be viewed in the context of pastoral care. This is the general ministry of nurturing and shepherding the life of a gathered community of faith. Thus, pastoral counseling is a process of the Christian minister helping people, utilizing a face-to-face relationship with an individual or individuals in assisting them to adequately handle their problems. Furthermore, it is a process of helping people grow toward the fulfillment of their God-centered or God-intended potentialities as priceless persons. Clinebell describes this task which pastoral counseling is now facing. He says:¹⁶

Pastoral counseling must come of age in both theory and practice. It must find a new level of self-identity and maturity, by deepening its theological roots, broadening its methodology, and discovering its unique contribution to the helping of troubled humanity, with reference to both its own heritage and the other helping disciplines.

The pastoral counselor has a particular "focus of functions," which encompasses both his/her role as the representative of a tradition--the church and the role as a

¹⁶Clinebell, Basic Types, pp. 16-17.

facilitator of human fulfillment. A practical aspect of the pastoral counselor's uniqueness is that the minister is expected and hopefully trained to use religious resources as an integral part of the counseling process. Hence, the pastor's theological training should equip him/her to be particularly helpful to those whose problems center in complex ethical dilemmas, religious conflicts, and the need to discover meaning in their existence. Finally, the pastor is unique as a counselor is in that the pastor regards spiritual growth as a necessary and explicit goal. For this purpose, prayer, scripture, devotional literature, sometimes even Communion, constitute valuable supportive religious resources which are unique to pastoral counseling. Functioning with this orientation, religion will inevitably influence all of the counseling relationships, whether or not the pastor chooses to use "religious language."

5. What Do Chinese Christians Expect Of Their Pastors:

The very nature and uniqueness of ministers bring about some assets for pastoral counselors. They are discussed briefly in the following section.

First of all, the pastor's ongoing day-to-day relationships with sizeable groups of persons, through all the stages of the life cycle, will provide him/her with innumerable opportunities to be of help. No other helping professions have such a supportive fellowship to undergird its

work with troubled people.

Generally speaking, the unique role of the minister or pastoral counselor invites people to him/her with various expectations. According to R. L. Hudson's study there are several role-images that American lay people hold toward their pastor. They are:¹⁷

- (1) the minister is a friend-at-large for the church and God,
- (2) the minister is sincerely interested in marriage and the home,
- (3) the minister is in a trusted role as far as divorce issues are concerned,
- (4) the minister is considered as an authority on right and wrong, and
- (5) the minister offers Christians some kind of "salvation."

In contrast to the above (1) and (2) role-images of pastors, Chinese Christians regard their pastor as a parent figure rather than as a friend figure. They trust their pastor, yet they would not bring a divorce issue to him/her. According to the author's observation the following expectations toward ministers are commonly seen among Chinese lay people in addition to the above (2), (4), and (5) role-images. These are:

*** they expect the minister to be available

¹⁷R. L. Hudson, Marital Counseling (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 16-19.

*** they expect the minister to be a "super-person," who is capable and wise,

*** they expect the minister to be a "holy-person," who view things spiritually.

The pastoral counselor needs to be aware of the various role expectations that are held by the Christians and to use them constructively in a counseling ministry.

PART THREE

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF A
PASTORAL PREMARITAL COUNSELING PROGRAM
IN TAIWAN

CHAPTER VI

A THEOLOGY OF CREATIVE MARRIAGE

Premarital counseling is not a set of techniques to be used in isolation from basic beliefs or from one's vocation as a Christian pastor. Premarital counseling is a form of Christian ministry, set within a framework of the Christian understanding of the nature of God, of mankind, and especially of marriage. Since premarital counseling is done in the context of Christian faith, it is well for the author to explore some basic theological assumptions regarding marriage. Of course, each pastor must work out his/her own theological position as a base for ministry through premarital counseling.

It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the different theological aspects of Christian marriage throughout the Christian history. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is the author's attempt to review his own position about Christian marriage and what makes it creative.

A. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

1. It Is An Order Of Creation:

In its original intention marriage was to have the status of a partnership between man and woman (Gen.2: 18), a state of being created for each other (Gen.2: 21-22), and

of recognizing themselves in each other. The man-woman relationship is indeed for Barth an important aspect of the created nature of human beings. Mankind has been made not for existence as an isolated individual, but for what Barth calls "co-existence." Barth stresses that "One is human only in fellow-humanity. And of this life in coexistence or fellow-humanity, the man-woman relationship is the prototype."¹ Because marriage is grounded in the primeval relationship of the sexes, it is a constituent part of the things that were created and is therefore an order of creation.²

In terms of the creative work of God, marriage is one of those structures of society given as a part of creation. In other words, marriage is an institution as old as the human race itself. Particularly, this means that marriage is viewed by Christians as a form of human relationship which God ordained for mankind generally and not alone for Christians.

Helmut Thielicke says, "Marriage is not only a Christian institution. On the contrary, marriage is an order of creation instituted by God and recognized by law--

¹Karl Barth, "On Marriage," in his Church Dogmatic (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), III/4, iii.

²Helmut Thielicke, The Ethics of Sex (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 104.

remains in force quite independent of the question whether it is recognized and accepted in faith."³ Hence God's intention is revealed in the very structure of society. It applies to all mankind whether they acknowledge God or not. Marriage, then, is not a convenient pairing of men and women contrived by society, but the basic social structure given by God in creation.⁴

2. It Is More Than An Ethical Marriage:

There are many cultures in this world and there are as many different concepts of marriage as there are cultures. Sociologists will say that the Chinese concept of marriage varies from any other because its culture is different. However, it is a common assumption by non-religious persons that marriage is essentially ethical marriage in which the couple live together with respect, love, and decency.

Nevertheless, a Christian marriage must be more than an ethical marriage. The Christian begins, not with a system of ethics, but with faith--faith in the existence of God, confidence in God's attributes. This orientation is implied in the opening statement of the Christian wedding

³Ibid., p. 138.

⁴United Methodist Church, To Love and To Cherish (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 49.

ceremony: "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the presence of God...." This statement with the emphasis upon "The presence of God" reminds the Christian couple that what they are about to do is God-centered. Their God-centered orientation will permit them to establish a Christian, a creative marriage relationship.

Rosemary Haughton summarizes her study of Paul's one essential condition for marriage for a Christian by saying it should be "in the Lord," caught up in the Christian experience of the new life whose full flowering is the coming of the Kingdom.⁵ "In the Lord," indicates human marriage finds its eternal and proper reality in the bridal relationship of God with his people. According to Haughton's study, insofar as marriage is "in the Lord" it is not just a convenient social arrangement, or a way of coping with sex, but is indeed "a great mystery," the mystery of redemption.⁶

As H. A. Bowman also says, "Marriage is not merely a matter of personal choice, legal sanction, or societal significance. It is first and fundamentally a matter of ultimate orientation, an expression of highest intention, an

⁵Rosemary Haughton, The Theology of Marriage (Notre Dame: Fides, 1971), pp. 20-21.

⁶Ibid.

awareness of essential meaning."⁷

Thus, for the Christian, marriage is understood not only as beginning in the natural creation, but also as coming within the scope of redemption, as continuing and finding fulfillment in the Christian way of life. And meanwhile Christian couples are to be aware of, and live this reality within the earthly conditions in which they find themselves.⁸ Their love for each other will lead them to consider carefully every aspect of their relationships--physical, emotional, social, economic, as well as religious.

3. It Is A Covenant Relationship:

Christian marriage is not simply a personal choice between two individuals; it is not merely a legal contract or a social institution; nor is it just a Christian ceremony prescribed by the church. Entering marriage, for Christians, is entering a covenant relationship which combines the three essential elements of the personal, the social, and the sacred.

The first element of the covenant relationship is personal. For the Christian marriage originates in the call of God to particular individuals. Thus, responding to God,

⁷Henry A. Bowman, A Christian Interpretation of Marriage (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 22.

⁸Haughton, p. 21.

two persons enter the marriage relationship on the basis of free consent. There can be no coercion of any kind.⁹ The covenant relationship is based on the personal choice of two people freely responding to God's will for them. This also means that a mature, responsible Christian does not drift into marriage; rather he/she chooses it as a deliberate decision of the whole being in response to God's call to marriage as a new state in life. Furthermore, a Christian does not enter marriage with just any person to whom he or she may be attracted, but with that particular person with whom he/she sincerely believes God's will can be fulfilled.

Another essential element of the covenant relationship is social. Although personal and private in origin, marriage can never be a private association regulated only by the personal desires of two individuals. Social responsibility is intrinsic to every marriage. For good or ill, society's welfare is involved in every marriage. The public character of Christian marriage is attested to by the fact that a couple enters into the covenant relationship in the presence of the congregation.

The third element of the covenant relationship is its sacred nature. The sacredness of the marriage does not

⁹United Methodist Church, p. 57.

lie only in the fact that it is instituted in a religious ceremony before the Christian community. But more importantly it lies in the fact that in Christian marriage two persons make a lifelong commitment to each other in the presence of God.

It is emphasized in the premarital counseling manual of the United Methodist Church: "God is not some external attachment added to the wedding ceremony; He enters into the marriage in and through the lives of the partners. Before God they make an unconditional covenant with each other to live in His steadfast love and to be faithful to each other and to their vows."¹⁰

Although marriage is not considered a sacrament in Protestantism, it does have a sacramental character. For God not only is in the origin and institution of the marriage, but also is a constant source of strength and guidance throughout the covenant relationship.

4. It Is Monogamous:

When marriage is seen in the light of the divine covenant, it is clear that it is an exclusive relationship, it is necessarily monogamous. Even though there may be societies in which other forms of marriage are practiced,

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 57-58.

such as in early Hebrew history when the Old Testament patriarchs were polygamists, Calvin regards polygamy as repugnant to God's ordinance of marriage.¹¹ Julius Fritze says, "Polygamy has its historical value but its value is only in history. It is not natural, therefore, it is not feasible nor is it workable today."¹² We believe that God intends marriage to be monogamous.

In an intimate marriage relationship husband and wife "belong" to each other exclusively--so exclusively that the entry of a third party is regarded as an intrusion and a threat to the partnership itself. Barth expresses his position thus: "In every dimension a third party, whether male or female, can only disturb and destroy the full life partnership."¹³

5. It Is A Lifelong Partnership:

It is evident that the decision for Christian marriage is a matter of supremely particular divine vocation. In the light of this vocation, marriage is the special life-partnership established and maintained between a particular

¹¹Derrick S. Bailey, The Mystery of Love and Marriage (New York: Harper & Row, 1952), p. 174.

¹²Julius A. Fritze, The Essence of Marriage (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969), p. 24.

¹³Barth, III/4, 19.

man and a particular woman. Barth defines it thus:¹⁴

Marriage is something which fixes and makes concrete the encounter and interrelation of man and woman in the form of the unique, unrepeatable and incomparable encounter and relationship between a particular man and a particular woman. Their encounter and relationship signifies in this context a life-partnership. This life-partnership is not partial but complete.

Therefore, in reality, a marriage entered into on a temporary basis is no marriage at all. True marriage involves a depth of companionship that cannot grow in an unstable, temporary atmosphere. It can be developed only within a permanent relationship.¹⁵

Many Christians are familiar with the words which the minister announces before the benediction in the wedding service: "Whom therefore God hath joined together, let no one put asunder." This "joining together" is the result of two people's loving each other, of their wishing to tell the whole world that they want to covenant together for life, and of their asking God's help and blessing. The "joining together" refers to the essence of the nature of Christian marriage.

The fulfillment of this life-partnership becomes a lifelong task for the couple. In Barth's words marriage as

¹⁴Ibid., III/4, 182-183.

¹⁵United Methodist Church, pp. 52-53.

a life-partnership is task-labor at the work of art of the couple's common being.¹⁶ Marriage is then, a true, heavenly, spiritual, and divine estate, a "school of faith and love," because men and women learn both therein. Therefore, matrimony is the natural way to the attainment of life everlasting.¹⁷ The marriage of two persons on the basis of genuine love has thus to be understood by them as a task which they must take in hand consciously, advisedly, and with a strong sense of responsibility.

A Christian marriage can never fail, but the people in that marriage can fail. Today, the fact that some marriages must be terminated for grave and sufficient reasons does not change the fact that the intention with which two people enter marriage must be "till death us do apart." To say that the choices of some individuals may contribute to marriage breakdown does not mean that divorce is God's intention.

6. It Is An Equalitarian Partnership:

Generally speaking, the woman's natural dependency on the man as provider and protector throughout human history is due to the obvious fact that the male is endowed

¹⁶Barth, III/4, 7.

¹⁷Bailey, p. 170.

with greater physical strength. Historically, Chinese men were given great power because of their physical strength and also because of a religious belief. This was that the man is given the power by god to bear the seed of life. Man plants the seed of life in the woman's womb. Thus, men were thought to be the source for the propagation of life.

It is understandable that in a world where survival required superior physical strength and numerous male offspring, it was natural that the man should assume the primary responsibility for the family. In such a society the man is recognized as the head of the family or clan; he is invested with the authority to rule. Since the Old Testament is a collection of writings by males from a society dominated by males, it is not surprising that the writers speak of events and activities engaged in primarily or exclusively by males. Furthermore, in the culture of the first century, wives were expected to show deference to husbands, and so some writings of the New Testament indicated the hierarchical view of the man-woman relationship.

We should not, therefore, absolutize hierarchy as the best possible societal structure for all ages and all places. Hierarchical view of the man-woman relationship is not the only possible expression of the divine will for every civilization. People have the freedom and power to determine for themselves what model of marriage relationship they will have and to change customs that are no longer

functional. In fact, passages in the New Testament have already revealed the "new" Christian insight of the man-woman relationship.

Commenting on Paul's view of the man-woman relationship, Mitton states "Paul seems to have not quite resolved the conflict between the view of women consistent with his new Christian insights and the view which he inherited from his Jewish part."¹⁸ However, Mitton concludes that Paul's new Christian insights prevail over his old Jewish traditions when he writes:¹⁹ "In Christ there is neither male nor female." (Gal. 3: 28) He recognizes that marriage relationship has been transformed for real Christians. For them the wife now has the same claims upon her husband as the husband has upon her (I Co. 7: 4), and both husband and wife are equally interdependent on one another (I Co. 11: 11). Apparently, Paul's statement, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Eph. 5: 21), is recommending a principle of mutual consideration in Christian marriage.

The idea that the husband is the rightful head of the family is based on traditional custom. Today, we should not wish to continue the use of the word "subordination,"

¹⁸C. Leslie Mitton, Commentary on Ephesians (Greenwood: Attic Press, 1976), p. 197.

¹⁹Ibid.

"subjection," or "inferiority" within marriage. True intimacy in the marriage relationship is impossible where there are rigid lines of command. The old dominance-submission pattern of marriage in which the man is always the "head of the house" will not work in an equalitarian relationship. In it marriage "mutuality" prevails over "hierarchy." In such an equalitarian marriage the emphasis is not on competition for leadership, but on the smooth meshing of the two people toward their individual and joint goals.²⁰

Using the words "equalitarian" and "marriage" in the same phrase may seem a contradiction of terms to many people. Indeed, until recent times it was almost universally expected that only the bride would promise to be subject to her husband. Today, many people may still feel that this is appropriate. However, not only from the recent consciousness-raising movement (particularly among women), but also from Christian faith and experience, the hierarchical concept is not regarded as acceptable by an increasing number of modern people. Some may believe society is much too slow in accepting these changes. Other couples may find the change difficult and threatening. But increasingly it appears inevitable. As Charlotte Clinebell remarks:²¹

²⁰Charlotte Clinebell, Meet Me in the Middle (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 56.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 31.

Definitions of femininity and masculinity are changing. We are moving toward the time when distinguishing the sexes on the basis of what we do, how we feel, and how we look will have little importance. Women are now beginning to value themselves more and to insist on being valued equally by men and by society.

B. THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

As a structure of creation, marriage is understood to have an essential nature and certain purposes. It has been stated in the previous section that marriage is a commitment, a bond in which one man commits himself as a person to an individual woman and vic versa. In Jacob Dominian's technical theological language, one gives the rights to one's partner by which the essential purposes of marriage may be fulfilled.²² The author regards the four purposes of marriage to be union, fellowship, procreation, and the nurture of children. Each one is of unique importance.

1. Union:

One purpose of marriage is seen in its unitive function. When two people marry they create a new unity without losing their own individuality in the process. Marriage is in fact, an intimate relationship in which two individuals give up their independence to find their individuality

²²Jacob Dominian, Christian Marriage (London: Darton, 1967), p. 238.

strengthened and developed by their union.²³ Male and female become "one" in marriage.

Jesus referred to creation of mankind (Gen. 2: 24) when he said "The two shall become one" (Mt. 19: 5). This does not mean one physical body, but a new dynamic unit--a new functioning, living, growing unit. The mystery of union is deep and difficult to understand. Nevertheless, it is a fact. This new union may begin tentatively during courtship but is initiated radically in the couple's sexual intercourse. Of course, it involves much more than sexual union, for it is a union of two whole persons, including the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of their whole being.

2. Fellowship:

Another purpose of marriage is fellowship, sometimes called the re-creative function.²⁴ God created male and female--persons who are incomplete in themselves alone. In the Genesis account of the creation, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone.'" (Gen. 2: 18). God instituted marriage as a means of overcoming this aloneness, this incompleteness of individuality, and for meeting the need of man and woman to complement and fulfill each

²³United Methodist Church, p. 49.

²⁴Ibid., p. 50.

other.

Marriage helps to meet the continuing need for recreating and nourishing the fellowship between husband and wife. It emphasizes the human need for intimacy and community. Bave Häring says, "Marriage is essentially a community and fellowship of love. In the natural order of creation nothing manifests the love of God so clearly and impressively as married love, which at least is also the germ of parental love."²⁵

The fellowship encompasses the total companionship needs of men and women, including the sexual union. Sex is one of God's gifts to mankind to be used within marriage to fulfill his several purposes, including the mutual satisfaction of the needs of both husband and wife. Sex is good when it meets the needs of persons and nourishes companionship, when it helps to strengthen and deepen the sense of fellowship between husband and wife as whole persons.

3. Procreation:

A third purpose of marriage is procreation. "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it....'" (Gen. 2: 28). Here the further purpose of marriage is expressed. It

²⁵Bave Häring, "Community of Love," in his The Meaning of Christian Marriage (Dublin: Dominican, 1965), p. 62.

is within marriage that God intends for life to be conceived and children to be brought into the world. This is the way God plans for continuing the population.

However, with all our concern about population today, we need to emphasize that the admonition to be "fruitful and multiply" does not mean to overpopulate. To be multiply and fruitful is given as a blessing not as a command. All people are under an obligation to see God's will for them in regard to family size and then to use the best available medical knowledge and materials for family planning. This means that each couple must discover the will of God for them at a particular time and place and not just their personal wishes. They should take into account all pertinent considerations such as the related physical, emotional, economic, and social factors.

4. Nurture:

A fourth purpose of marriage is sometimes referred to as the educative function. It is the view that parents are not only to bring children into the world but also to be responsible for their protection and nurture. It is hardly surprising that the Reformers were enthusiastic about the blessing of matrimony, and sensible of the consolations and the salutary disciplines of the home. In particular, they esteemed very highly the privilege and responsibility of parenthood. Luther considered the procreation and the

training of children to be the chief end of marriage. And he did not hesitate to describe parents as "apostle, bishop, and priest" to their offspring.²⁶

Nurture is the primary but not exclusive obligation of parents, since they need to be assisted by other persons and agencies. Indeed it is the responsibility of parents to make the fullest possible use of all appropriate resources. It is also society's responsibility to see that parents neither neglect their children nor deny them the benefits of society.²⁷ Christian emphasize the fact that the educative function of marriage includes the spiritual nurture of children as well as the supplying of their physical, psychological, social, educational, and other requirements for full growth.

C. A POSITION STATEMENT ON DIVORCE

A thorough discussion on divorce would require another whole book. It is not within the scope of this study to discuss the issue. Only a few words which indicate the author's position as a pastoral counselor are given.

Ideally, as a Christian minister the author does not agree that divorce is necessary. The author believes

²⁶Bailey, p. 180.

²⁷United Methodist Church, p. 51.

that no marriage relationship is so badly ruptured that it may not be rebuilt with a basic Christian faith in God, embracing His transcendent love, grace, forgiveness, and His power to change life. As a husband and wife respond to the love and grace of God, their marriage is opened to infinite possibilities.

Nevertheless, as a pastoral counselor the author realizes that even Christians are also human beings who bear the weakness of human nature. They are still human, still sinful, and they will continue to have problems. Realistically, there are serious crises which kill marriage, and so divorce should be permitted when a marriage relationship is dead. Several reasons for this view can be cited.

First of all, the author believes that God is superior to His creation, that His will is supreme; therefore, He is not bound by a structure of society given in creation. The statement of Jesus in Matthew 19: 4-6, "... What therefore God has joined together, let no one put asunder." can be recognized as the ideal or God's intention. It is not necessarily a legalistic requirement to be applied rigidly every case.²⁸ Such a position would be contrary to the general character of Jesus's teachings. Insistence on the absolute indissolubility of marriage in every case may be a

²⁸Ibid., p. 53.

legalistic misuse of a well-intentioned principle. That is, God's will is what is best for the welfare of persons rather than for the institution of marriage.²⁹ Human beings were not created for the marriage institution. Thus, the direction of the pastoral counselor is to save people first and then do the best the counselor can to save the marriage.

Marriage like any other social relationship, must be evaluated in terms of what it does to the persons involved--all persons, including children. The individuals have a right to seek happiness. The author would not insist that the couple maintain a divorce-like marriage. Life in a divorce-like marriage is living hell on earth. Thus, in particular instances separation or even divorce may be the best possible solution to a marriage that is destroying the persons involved.

Finally, God's forgiving love revealed in Jesus Christ leads the author to believe that a person needs not be forever doomed by a mistake, even one involving marriage. One may experience God's forgiveness and become a new creature, capable of entering into a new marriage as a new person.

The overall object of marriage counseling is not to prevent a few divorces but to increase the number of happy marriages.

²⁹Ibid.

D. FACTORS LEADING TOWARD A CREATIVE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Young people of today are free to choose their own mates and to establish their nuclear families. This places upon young people a big responsibility to make marriage creative and successful. The recipe for success in marriage is effort plus insight. By insight is meant an understanding of what one has to do in order to live comfortably and creatively in an intimate relationship with a person of the opposite sex. Effort without insight would not make marriage creative; insight without effort would not achieve it either. Only the combination of both makes the marriage creative. The following discussion presents a practical Christian view concerning factors which help to make a marriage relationship achieve a higher degree of creativity.

1. Intimate Relationship:

What are the essentials in marriage? Marriage is between two ordinary human beings who have come together in the most intimate of human relationships. The husband-wife relationship is indeed the highest of all human relationships. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one." (Mt. 19: 5)

In the past few years "Open Marriage" has made a

significant contribution in bringing about the new style of creative marriage relationship. However, the author does not agree with the point emphasizes in the "Open Marriage" that marriages are failing primarily because the husband-wife bond is too close, so that their relationship stifles the growth and individuality of the parties. The battle cry of the advocates of these new pattern is therefore, "Make the relationship looser and more open, and all will be well"

On the contrary, the author believes that the reason for the failure of the marriage in our time is not that the relationship is too close but that it is not close enough. What will make marriage happy and fulfilling is to bring the couple close together in a relationship-in-depth that makes the creative sharing of life possible. A creative marriage in our time is close and intimate without being exclusive and possessive.

In an intimate marriage relationship both husband and wife will respect the developing personality of the other. They will seek its enhancement, strengthen it wherever weak, encourage it in its goodness. This anticipates that each may be presented to the other even as Christ presents the Church, His spouse to Himself.³⁰ In other words,

³⁰J. K. Morris, Premarital Counseling (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1960), p. 4.

if a married couple will learn to realistically know and understand each other, and cultivate and develop the fine art of relating to and supporting each other, the marriage will indeed become the most intimate human relationship.

2. Difference Yet Harmony In Roles:

A centrality in Chinese philosophy is the theory of Ying and Yang. Ying is the female or passive principle, characterized as cold, wet, soft, dark, and mysterious; it is earth, moon, water, etc. Yang, the male or active principle, is warm, dry, hard, bright, and steadfast; it is heaven, sun, fire, etc. Ancient Chinese philosophers sought to explain the universe in terms of two elemental principles or forces, from whose eternal and harmonious conjunction all things come into being. In short, the theory of Ying-Yang means that everything is produced from the harmony of Ying and Yang. Out of the disorder of Ying-Yang comes the disorder of weather, the illness of human bodies, the discord of human relationships, the disturbance of society,... etc.

In the Ying-Yang theory woman is considered as unique and the counterpart of man--the half of the whole harmonic being, and vice versa. Therefore, when marriage takes place, the harmony of Ying and Yang or female and male is secured. Furthermore, while emphasizing the harmony of Ying and Yang in marriage, the separate and distinctive

functions and responsibilities of each are stressed as contributions to harmony in the husband-wife relationship.

In modern terms, a creative marriage lies in the harmony of "roles" in daily married life. Role in marriage is a concept which helps people to understand more clearly what happens in the interplay of the differing personalities partners. A creative marriage recognizes the individuals are different yet they are harmonious.

When two people marry they bring to the relationship the accumulated attitudes and habits which they have formed during years of separate living. It is absurd to imagine that their tastes, their views, or their values will be in complete agreement. Even if they were, it would be unreasonable to expect that they would always do the same thing in the same way at the same time.

Theologically and psychologically an assumption is made that each individual must affirm, accept, and direct him-/herself. Thus, in a creative marriage there is a need to accept each member as he/she is. God has made each person unique for good reasons. Love is not dependent upon being alike. Individuals do not have to be the same in order to live harmoniously. As a matter of fact, as Paul Jewett says,³¹

³¹Paul K. Jewett, Man as Male and Female (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1975), p. 69.

It is very important that men and women are different, since there can be no fellowship where there are no differences. Differences make for mutual enrichment in marriage relationship.

Therefore, differences if properly handled and utilized can be the source of strength and beauty. Just as in a beautiful painting where different colors are blended there can be unity or harmony in diversity. In the Bible "one" is a rich and suggestive word. Interpreting one flesh in marriage, Bailey states:³²

It implies the resolution of discord, the transcending of superficial differences and antagonism at a new and deeper level of existence or experience; not an amalgamation in which the identity of the constituents is swallowed up and lost in an undifferentiated unity, nor a mere conjunction in which no real union is involved.

No one can be happy with someone who does not allow individuality. Any self-sacrifice or effort which damages the personality or harms the genuine togetherness of partners is not a virtue but a fault. One of the most unfortunate tendencies among married couples is for each to try to remake his/her spouse. The process is doomed to failure.

Particularly, for Christians marriage means acceptance of the partner as he/she really is. When at the marriage altar people say to each other, "I take thee, for better or for worse...." This implies the acceptance of each

³²Bailey, pp. 43-45.

spouse as a whole person. One cannot merely accept the favorable traits in one's spouse, but also learn to bear and to adjust to the unfavorable ones.

3. Adjustment Is Of Primary Importance:

Since the couple cannot expect to be tailor-made for each other in married life, some adjustments will be inevitable. So, marriage can also be seen as two human beings who are different and who live together in a continuous experience of mutual adjustment, hoping that they can make a success of marriage. And the closer the couple come to intimate relationship, the more complex are the adjustments that may have to be made. A creative marriage succeeds in carrying out the complex task of each adjusting to the other partner. This may take months, years; it may even take a lifetime. But it has to be done if the marriage is going to be successful and creative.

The author believes that many marriages fail because the necessity of adjustment was not really faced by the couple. When marriage breaks down later in life, it is nearly always because the couple failed earlier to make a good mutual adjustment. Therefore, the marriage was weak and insecure from the beginning, and finally broke down under some especially heavy strain.

A couple who have not made a basic adjustment tend to grow away from each other. A couple who have adjusted

well tend to grow closer together with the passing of time. The husband and wife need to adjust to each other and this adjustment should be constant and continuous. Each day brings new situations and problems which must be met. Hence marital life calls for new adjustments as it goes through various stages of life. The component of mutual adjustment, together with hope, is of primary importance in a creative marriage relationship.

4. Dealing Constructively With Conflicts:

Marriage is between two ordinary human beings with good and bad points, virtues and shortcoming, who live together in an intimate relationship. That is why at a Christian wedding the minister says to the bride, "Do you take this man.....?" and to the groom, "Do you take this woman...?" The minister does not ask them, "Do you take this angel....?"

Hence every person has his/her own problem. So does every marriage. No two people are always of one mind. Just because married life is so close and intimate, husband and wife are bound to disagree at times. Disagreement may produce conflict. Conflict within acceptable limits is quite normal and quite inevitable in marriage. Indeed it is helpful and healthy, because it reveals where an adjustment has to be made.

Therefore, if the conflict is used constructively

to make mutual adjustment, the result is a strengthening of marriage. To achieve such a positive result, it is necessary that when conflict exists, other assets such as mutual understanding, open communication, and trust for each other be mobilized to resolve the conflict. To meet this need the couple must be quite mature and take a serious attitude toward it. Manytimes they need the assistance from outsiders to help them grow in maturity and deal with the conflict.

Marriage in this new perspective is a continually growing and changing interaction between a man and a woman who are seeking the creativeness of their shared life. R. L. Hudson says, "A sick marriage is a sure sign that one or both of the couple has not been creative in the relationship."³³ Creativity requires courage and risk. In Hudson's words, "The courage to risk failure, to be wrong, to make mistakes is an inherent part of creativity and spontaneity."

It is not necessary for a creative marriage to be problem free. Naturally, neither do all adjustments in marriage have to involve conflict. But it is not necessarily virtuous to avoid conflict or to repress it in marriage. That is to bury the problem and to accept an area of permanent estrangement. Some couples lacking the courage to face the problem may have to settle for that. However, in doing

³³R. L. Hudson, Marital Counseling (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 37.

so they settle for a second-rate relationship. Moreover, it often turns worse and leads to more complicated problems.

5. A Basis Of Equality:

Attitudes toward equality are closely related to the recognition of individual differences in a creative marriage. Equality is a necessary by-product of love in the husband-wife relationship.

The word "equality" has confusing implications when it is applied to men and women in the marital relationship. The word "equality" for men and women does not simply mean "a fifty-fifty marriage." Equal marriage means having the same status in the relationship, the same responsibility for the success of the relationship and for the couple's survival in the world. It does not mean looking alike or having all the same talents and interests or liking the same things or making the same amount of money.

The roles of both men and women are changing a great deal in modern society. Equality in marriage is measured by quality and not by quantity. True equality includes independence and responsibility. It is differentiated in function. In other words, because of the difference in the nature and constitution of husband and wife, their functions or roles may be different but the quality of their responsibility and individuality is the same.

Equality in marriage means the end of defining each

other by sex roles; for neither husband nor wife can be assigned or predicted certain jobs because "he is the man" or "she is the woman." It means taking the wants, needs, talents, skills, likes and dislikes of each into consideration when deciding who will do which job. In a creative marriage both husband and wife try to share duties and responsibilities in terms of proved competence. Moreover, the function and role of husband and wife is not stereotyped but flexible, for unusual circumstances may arise at times. It is in this situation that understanding and unselfish love may be displayed by each spouse. For instance, in case of illness or incapacity, or when the wife is working, the husband may take the role and responsibility of the wife and vice versa. Such efforts are creative tasks in achieving a creative marriage relationship and the fulfillment of God's will. That is, in an equal marriage, each partner is responsible for the health of the marriage.

6. Mutual Fulfillment:

A pattern of mutuality or consideration of each other should be developed also in a creative marital relationship. This pattern of mutuality is in line with the democratic process. Neither spouse should dominate. Domination is a display of power by one and submission by the other. It generates inequality and there is no interflow of ideas, no coordination of desires, no mutuality of decisions and

sharings. In such a relationship there is living together without consideration. It results in unsatisfied emotional needs because an intimate marriage cannot be separated from caring and consideration. In a creative marriage the spouse are partners, not master and slave, with no superior and no inferior. There is only respect for priceless individuals.

It is too selfish in the actual marriage relationship to always think of oneself. Similarly, it seems too idealistic and psychologically unsound to always think of the other and disregard one's self. Thus, each of the partners should not be concerned only with "what am I getting from this relationship?" nor only with "what am I contributing to this relationship?"

Basically, a couple as partners need to cooperate for mutual happiness. Therefore, in a creative marriage the emphasis is not upon give and take but upon a partnership and mutual fulfillment. The couple should think more of the partnership and not solely of the other. Each is encouraged to ask oneself, "What will be good for both of us?" There should be togetherness or mutuality in the marriage venture.

Furthermore, although a creative marriage relationship emphasizes mutual-fulfillment, it does not neglect the need of self-fulfillment of the partner. As a matter of fact, in a creative marriage the couple's individuality and humanity must be affirmed, the needs and desires of both

partners must be respected. In other words, each of the couple in the creative marriage must be free to live creative and satisfying lives, individually and together. In Charlotte Clinebell's words:³⁴

It is my conviction that what is called for now is "liberated marriage," a relationship in which two people who like each other, who love each other, who are able to have fun together, and who share the transcendent moments of life together. They must be able to accept each other's individuality and separateness, to rejoice in the other's achievements as well as in their own, to care for each other, to meet each other's needs as one way of meeting their own, to enjoy sex both deeply and playfully, to enjoy being and becoming human together.

7. Needs Are Satisfied:

According to a Christian point of view, a creative marriage is one in which "all those involved have maximum opportunity, through mutual need-satisfaction, to grow toward the fulfillment of their God-intended potentialities as persons."³⁵ James Hine in his book, Ground for Marriage, gives a fairly inclusive definition of Christian marriage. He says,³⁶

³⁴Charlotte Clinebell, Meet Me, p. 50.

³⁵Howard Clinebell, Basic Types, p. 97.

³⁶James R. Hine, Grounds for Marriage (Danville, IL: Interstate Printers, 1967), p. 39.

Marriage is the binding of two people, mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually. No union is complete that is based on just one of these factors. A marriage of two people who are intellectually compatible, but whose personalities clash, will experience difficulty. A spiritual union in which there is no physical attraction is unrealistic and incomplete.

Therefore, each of the spouses comes to marriage with complex needs, desires, expectations. Some of these are biological and psychological, and some are spiritual. Some of these needs are on the conscious level and some on the level of the unconscious. No matter which level they belong to, these needs have to be satisfied. If the needs are met, the spouses are satisfied and happy. The satisfaction of these needs makes one act positively. If not, the spouses suffer frustration.

8. The Right Use Of Sex:

To have a wholesome attitude toward sex in Christian marriage means first of all the recognition of sex as being of divine origin and therefore good and beautiful. However, as Morris says, "Oftentimes, people are quite willing to recognize the partnership of mind and spirit but not of the body. This is mainly because people consider sex as something low and degrading."³⁷

³⁷J. K. Morris, Marriage Counseling (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 172.

Sex involves the inner integrity of the persons. Sex and marriage can not be separated. Sex in marriage is an important area of life for Christian witness. In the Christian experience of the sexual life, both the spirit and the body are involved. In fact, they help each other. The spirit purifies and sanctifies the body, while the body in turn expresses the spirit. This symbolizes the uniqueness of the husband-wife relationship in one flesh.

Lewis Smedes says that sex in its supreme expression of self-giving marks the spiritual quality that attends sex in marriage.³⁸ Sexual interaction becomes a means of discovering and appreciating each other's fullness of being, a means of expanding and illuminating our identity, a way of revitalizing and adding joy to married lives. Therefore, sexual compatibility is a factor in love and a sacramental unity of the total personality of both partners.

It is also recognized that sexual adjustment and adjustment in other areas of marital life are closely connected. The sexual maladjustment between the spouses may easily color the other phases of life. It may influence the interpersonal relationship of the couple, their economic, and even their religious lives. Concerning this matter, in a creative marriage each spouse must give his/her best in

³⁸Lewis B. Smedes, Sex for Christians (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1976), p. 27.

sexual compatibility for the mutual fulfillment and enjoyment of the relationship. David Mace says:³⁹

Sexual harmony in marriage is of considerable importance to the happiness of the couple. Serious frustration and hurt feelings related to sex are very disturbing to both husband and wife and can very soon destroy their feelings of warmth and tenderness toward each other.

9. Christian Commitment:

Besides the above important factors which make a marriage creative, a Christian marriage is based on the special quality of the relationship between the husband and wife. That is, in their married life they put their Christian beliefs into practice.

A model of marriage could be viewed legally as a "contract" between the spouses. However, from the theological point of view, married life is a spiritual relationship. Marriage for Christians is not merely a contract but a commitment. The words read in the wedding ceremony indicate that marriage is a beautiful and holy commitment in which two people are joined together. The commitment is made perfect by a power higher than themselves, "What therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." It is this essence of commitment which distinguishes the marriage

³⁹David R. Mace, Success In Marriage (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 47.

from the worldly institutions and makes it intrinsically a Christian institution.

What makes marriage a Christian experience? Pauline Trueblood says, "It is not the presence of pastor or priest, candles or incense; it is commitment."⁴⁰ Commitment gives a new depth and strength to the marriage relationship. Again Trueblood says, "So long as marriage is seen as a holy commitment there is hope for our confused civilization."⁴¹

Lacking commitment in marriage, when people have marital problems, they would tend to look for a way out rather than for a workable solution. The point that marriage is more than a contract needs to be given the widest possible dissemination and acceptance by Christians today.

10. Sharing The Basic Faith:

The offer of marriage itself is a commitment through which to establish the common life. Love and trust are demanded as the condition of its fulfillment and creativity.

Christian marriage is the unity of a Christian man and a Christian woman with the shared intention of their lives with each other in the highest love that they know. The enduring commitment of love in Christian marriage is

⁴⁰Pauline Trueblood, The Recovery of Family Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), p. 46.

⁴¹Ibid.

"Love one another with all your heart, soul, and strength." The fact that we do not achieve this ideal does not invalidate it. A Christian marriage is then the dedication of both husband and wife to have God as their helper in fulfilling their love for them.

Trust in Erik Erikson's view is a final component of interpersonal competence. He says,⁴²

Trust which provides a basis for interpersonal competence is the most fundamental component of personality development. Unless one has a certain degree of trust in another, one would not be outgoing or open to a relationship.

Thus, trust becomes an indispensable interpersonal component in a creative marriage. Love for each other and trust for each other are the most important keys to open the door of creative marriage.

The great secret of practicing love and trust in marriage to a highly effective and productive level is for the couple to have the same Christian faith. As we have seen, husband and wife have many adjustments to make. When two people share a vital religious faith, a deep sense of unity undergirds their lives and is a tremendous help in their mutual adjustments. Surveys have shown that the happiest marriages come to people who:

⁴²Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1950), pp. 249-250.

- (1) belong to and attend church regularly;⁴³
- (2) participate in the purpose and work of the church; and
- (3) carry the spirit and practice of religion into their homes.

It is easy to see why this is so. People who are genuinely religious are dedicated to the highest values in life such as truth, love, trust, beauty, and goodness. They are dedicated to service and usefulness which crowd out selfishness. They have at the center of their lives the love of God and their fellow-people from which comes respect, understanding, acceptance, tolerance, good disposition, and steadfast purpose. Thus, we should comprehend how a shared faith provides the framework for a life of creative marriage.

⁴³Hine, p. 55.

CHAPTER VII

DESCRIPTION OF A PASTORAL PREMARITAL
COUNSELING PROGRAM FOR TAIWANESE CHURCHES

Pastoral premarital counseling is a broader activity than is often understood. The author has examined the importance of premarital counseling and evaluated the practice of it in Taiwan. We should now consider some practical dimensions which will serve as guideposts in the actual structuring of the program. In proposing the program, the author has taken those difficulties and opportunities for premarital counseling in Taiwanese churches into consideration. However, because the following description is mainly based on the subjectivity of the author's own experience and on the American literature, the model described here is regarded by the author as tentative. The model which can be most useful for the Taiwanese churches may be quite different from any Western model or the author's presenting model. Therefore, the most effective and indigenous model of premarital counseling program still needs to be revised after practical experimenting in Taiwanese churches.

A. THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM

It is a help to both pastors and couples if they have previous knowledge of the realistic focuses or goals

of premarital counseling.¹ The focuses of the pastoral premarital counseling program will affect the response of the minister to the context and the structure of the program. The author considers the following eight major areas as those that should be focused in a pastoral premarital counseling program.

1. Assessing The Readiness For Marriage:

The process of premarital counseling should begin with helping a couple assess their own readiness to marry. Specifically, the pastor should help the couple to see themselves and each other more clearly, to be aware of the potential areas of stress within the marriage, etc. Rutledge defines the counselor's task as that of helping the couple to examine their readiness for marriage with particular emphasis on three areas. These are:²

- (1) the personality development and attitudes of each partner;
- (2) the perception each has of self, of the other partner, and of the marital roles of each;
- (3) the past experiences in terms of success or failure, that they have had in close interpersonal relationships.

¹Howard J. Clinebell, Growth Counseling for Marriage Enrichment (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 53.

²Aaron L. Rutledge, Premarital Counseling (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1970), pp. 18-19.

In replacing the above three areas, when counseling the Chinese young couples in assessing their readiness for marriage, the author focuses on the following two areas.

(1) Examining Emotional Maturity: In fact, the emotional maturity of a partner is usually related to Rutledge's three focused areas mentioned above.

Generally speaking, a major difficulty for a couple with marital trouble is their emotional immaturity. If a person is emotionally immature, he/she is not ready for marriage. Emotional maturity is very important for the interactions of married life. Thus, the author regards the centrality of the personality dynamics of the couple as the primary focus in premarital counseling.

The exploration of such personality dynamics would either further a couple's readiness for marriage, or uncover a lack of readiness. William Hulme reflects this emphasis when he seeks to stress that the key to marriage lies in the realm of personality dynamics. He says:³

Hence, it is part of the task of premarital counseling to unearth potential difficulties and make every effort to resolve attitudes, feelings, or motivations which might stand in the way of marriage.

A much stronger expression of the manner in which

³William E. Hulme, The Pastoral Care of Families (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 45-47.

personality dynamics should be approached in premarital counseling is found in the article by Paul Johnson. He makes a case for the fact that it is not just conscious factors which draw couples together and influence them to marry. He sees as the larger force that of unconscious motivation which is highly active in causing people to seek marriage. Finally he notes that one of the prime features in assessing the readiness for marriage is "to make the unconscious conscious."⁴

The author sees that the strongest case for examining emotional maturity is made by Charles Stewart who includes "personality dynamics" as the largest segment of his discussion of the "screening aspect of premarital interviews."⁵ Overall, the impression is clear that personality dynamics are focal for Stewart, and he encourages ministers in their premarital counseling to utilize these in an effort to evaluate and screen persons as to their readiness for marriage as well as to their suitability to each other.⁶

To examine emotional maturity in premarital counseling the pastor should seek first to establish and create

⁴Paul E. Johnson, "Emotional Problems in Premarital Counseling," Pastoral Psychology, X: 99 (December 1959), 18-24.

⁵Charles W. Stewart, The Minister As Marriage Counselor, Rev. ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 53.

⁶Ibid., pp. 53-59.

an atmosphere where openness is encouraged and where exploration of personality dynamics is welcomed. For this purpose, the pastoral counselor is expected to possess the requisite skills and expertise which such a task requires. In this regard, Hulme encourages ministers to utilize one or more of the personality-type questionnaires available.⁷ Through the use of insights gained from items on such questionnaires, needed help could be given. These personality-type tests would be appropriate or helpful with Chinese people only when they are revised in accordance to Chinese situations. Furthermore, a caution must be made that such tests should be used after receiving training or perhaps in consultation with a psychologist.

(2) Discovering True Love: It is very possible for some young adults to be victims of the romantic illusion that love is something which happened at first sight. When two young people fall in "love" can then be a dangerous and destructive period. Sometimes "love" can blind a couple. Manytimes the couple who are falling in love just can not see each other clearly. Each of them tries to hide behind a mask. Most of the things they have seen are only the masks and cover-ups of the other person. A masquerade is all right as a game, but as a way of life it becomes terribly

⁷Hulme, pp. 57-58.

self-destructive. The mask or costume may become so convincing that individuals fool themselves. It cuts off all hope of self-understanding and the understanding of other persons.

Therefore, another important aspect of examining the couple's readiness for marriage is to discover the true love or the motivation for getting married. To establish a creative marriage there must come the time for each partner to take off the mask and reveal one's true love or motivation for marriage. Only then can they understand each other and face their marriage realistically. It is the focus of the pastor in this stage of premarital counseling to help the couple remove their masks and reveal their true self. Through this task the pastor will have the best chance to explain explicitly to the couple the Christian meaning of marital love.

The pastor may help the couple clarify this matter by simply asking, "Why are you getting married?" Couples need to be honest about their motivations and discuss with each other openly. If their response is basically for personal satisfaction, the marriage is already in grave danger. Those who seek only personal satisfaction in marriage are often disappointed when confronted by the stress of marital adjustments. Ultimately, in marital love is not based on merely receiving but on giving and sharing.

If a couple is not ready to marry, the pastor ought

to suggest to them not to get married right away. More important, the pastor should be sincere and enthusiastic in assisting the couple to change and grow in maturity during the prolonged period of marriage preparation.

2. Enhancing The Interpersonal Relationship:

(1) Emphasize On Here And Now Issues: In Howard Clinebell's words there is explicit emphasis to consider premarital counseling as an actual "lab experience" or a "training setting." He says, "... Premarital guidance gives attention to how the couple copes with tensions, feelings, and problems arising during the prewedding period, including the anxieties of premarital counseling."⁸

In that sense, premarital counseling can be defined as a form of counseling which focuses around the interpersonal relationship of a man and a woman. It helps the couple evaluate their relationship in the light of their approaching marriage and acquaints them with ways by which they may build a happy and successful marriage. Or, in the light of the evaluation of the couple's relationship, it may result in their deciding against the marriage.⁹

⁸Howard J. Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 200.

⁹J. K. Morris, Premarital Counseling (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1960), p. 15.

In premarital counseling the pastor enables the couple to discuss their own interpersonal relationships--past, present, and future. However, one important principle in all premarriage sessions is to focus on issues the couple have experienced presently. That is: "In what areas do this two partners find it difficult to communicate?" "How does the couple resolve conflict when they disagree over something important?" While dealing with such interpersonal relationships of the couple, the emphasis is on "here and now." This focus is more productive during the premarital interview than speculating about what might happen in the future.

(2) Open-Communication Is The Key Word: As may be seen in writings by many other specialists, the major feature of the partnership view of marriage is the centrality of open communication. It puts emphasis upon expressing the feelings openly in an effort to achieve an intimate relationship for mutuality.

The findings of this survey also revealed that the sample regarded the factor of Open Communication as highly necessary for a creative marriage. Thus, an approach in counseling with Chinese young adults towards open communication skills will in the long run be helpful and in accord with their desires and needs.

However, as Carl Rogers states, "... young people

start out their marriage without the foggiest notion of how to live in human personal interaction--literally without any experience in real interpersonal sharing communication with partners."¹⁰ It is urged that the pastoral counselor actively involve couples in a process of communicating openly and clearly during premarital counseling sessions. In other words, "Tell it like it is" characterizes the powerful thrust toward open communication. The pastor is to assume that he/she can offer significant help in this direction needed.

It is here that Clinebell's emphasis on "open communication" and his suggestions for some guidelines in this direction appear most clear and practical. It is stated in his list of varied goals for the whole process of premarital counseling.¹¹

.....

- (e) setting an example for them of openness of communication on taboo topics such as sex and anger;
- (f) introducing them to the "language of relationship;"
- (h) giving them a "juicy taste" of a somewhat deeper level of communication than they have hitherto experienced.....

¹⁰Carl R. Rogers, Becoming Partners (New York: Delta Press, 1972), p. 214.

¹¹Clinebell, Basic Types, p. 201.

Oates also emphasizes that conversation with the premarital couple should be open, honest, and kind without being boastfully brutal.¹² He says, "By such an approach, the pastor can model effective communication for prospective married persons."¹³ By such an approach the pastor can also encourage the couple to regard open communication as a primary means for moving beyond their emotional impasses. The pastor can show them that in a mature relationship people are not threatened by their disagreement or conflicts, but strive to work them out. The pastor should play a vital part in helping them to develop such an ability.

(3) Direct Negative Feelings Constructively: In the past, the majority of one's time has not been spent with one's spouse. This permitted individuals to avoid anger-initiating behavior and to repress it. However, as Arlo Campaan says, "In the expressive marriage such is not possible because both spouses have almost total personality contact with each other."¹⁴

¹²Wayne E. Oates and Wade Rowatt, Before You Marry Them (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975), pp. 110-111.

¹³Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁴Arlo D. Campaan, "A Study of Contemporary Young Adult Marital Styles," (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1973), p. 240.

The expression of negative feelings is unavoidably involved in the depth and closeness of a marital relationship. To initiate and facilitate conversation about such negative feelings is a major task in dealing with the couple's inter-relationship in premarital counseling.

As Oates points out, the couple must learn to name their feelings, name their feelings, and aim their feelings.¹⁵ It is urged that ministers attempt to have the premarital counseling sessions create "a freedom to be oneself, an atmosphere which facilitates the practice of open expression and acceptance of genuine feelings."¹⁶ A sensitive pastoral counselor will want to help a couple to be able to identify their feelings, to gauge the intensity of these feelings, and then to be able to ventilate their power rather than to be destroyed by it.

It is recognized that a certain amount of conflict is healthy and necessary for normal growth. The pastor's role is to help the couple to adjust themselves with a minimum of destructive conflict and a normal amount of constructive conflict. It will be important for the pastoral counselor to assist the couple in developing skills for constructive fighting. When doing that, the pastor should

¹⁵Oates and Rewatt, p. 112.

¹⁶Paul E. Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 142.

first affirm the couple by helping them recognize their strengths and assets. The pastor then helps them look at their problems in the context of their strengths and rich potentialities. Finally, the pastor encourages the couple to use these assets in developing a mutually-actualizing marriage.¹⁷ A practical and helpful book for counselors on this subject is George Bach and Peter Wyden's The Intimate Enemy.¹⁸

3. Discussing Basic Marital Information:

A third goal of premarital counseling is the discussion of basic information which the couple desires and needs. Premarital counseling provides an important opportunity for the couple to discuss their problems or anxieties. At the same time it provides the pastor the opportunity to offer personalized instruction relevant to their felt needs. This focus for discussing the relevant content is called by Clinebell the "educative oriented" premarital counseling.

For this matter it is very important for the minister to develop his/her sensitivity to the couple's needs. Clinebell says, "The pastor's emotional radar antennas should be turned to the wave length of people, not just of

¹⁷Clinebell, Growth Counseling, p. 53.

¹⁸George Bach and Peter Wyden, The Intimate Enemy (New York: Avon, 1968).

buildings, budgets, and bean suppers."¹⁹ The author of this study suggests that the following subjects may profitably be considered for discussing with Chinese young couples:

- (1) The transition of marriage patterns.
- (2) The Christian view of marriage.
- (3) What makes marriage creative.
- (4) Religious differences.
- (5) Sex in marriage.
- (6) The role of husband and wife.
- (7) Marriage and vocation.
- (8) Finances and money management.
- (9) Problems with in-laws.
- (10) Family planning.

.....

There are different ways to approach the discussion of the relevant contents in premarital counseling. Traditionally, a Chinese pastor is to give advice and warning, or to make plans and decisions for Christians. These pastoral functions are based on authoritative and responsible judgement. The minister with an authoritarian orientation feels a sense of responsibility if members of the church do not follow the life the minister considers correct. Hence,

¹⁹Clinebell, Basic Types, p. 82.

in premarital counseling the minister sees it as one's role to "instruct" the couple about the things which the pastor regards they should know.

A disadvantage of this type of orientation is that the minister may not sense the areas of real feeling or concern which the couple need to explore. The couple may not discuss the contents of those anxieties that are actually causing real confusion and distress. Furthermore, if the minister encourages them to rely on the minister to decide their needs and do their thinking for them, they are not equipped to face future marital problems.

Another antithetical approach to the above is that in which the minister is permissive to the extent that the couple alone determines the agenda. This overly permissive approach points to one central problem: Lack of educational direction.²⁰

Effectively, the contents for discussion should be built on a joint basis between the pastor and the couple after they meet for premarital counseling. One of the techniques that is quite effective is to use a chalkboard and ask the couple to list the subjects which they would like to discuss. At the same time the pastor suggests other

²⁰John R. Knox, "The Role of Minister As A Premarital Counselor," (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, School of Theology at Claremont, 1961), p. 30.

important subjects that they did not raise. Wade Rewatt has suggested some principles for giving information during the discussion.²¹

- (1) The information is imparted specifically in response to a felt need on the part of the couple.
- (2) The material is communicated through relationship and not just through an authoritarian pronouncement.
- (3) The material is placed in the context of a caring, Christian community.

4. Resolving Family Tensions:

A fourth focus of premarital counseling is to assist the couple if necessary to reconcile their relationships which have been disrupted in freeing themselves from parental or family structures. The disruption of family relationships may be the main forces which move the couple toward marriage. For Chinese people premarital pregnancy, the disagreement about the couple's new residence, and family planning are usually the causes of the tension between the young couple and their family. It may also be caused by parents' disapproval of the marriage because of differences in the couple's social, cultural, and religious status. Or the tension may even be due to the rigidity of the parent's traditional concept that they should choose the marriage

²¹Oates and Rewatt, p. 71.

partner for their children.

At this point, premarital counseling can be of big help to these people. The pastor in these cases can help a young couple to examine their own situation first and then to try to find access to all persons involved in order that possible reconciliation can be achieved between the couple and the family. As the author said earlier Chinese parents probably would not come for counseling their family problem. A remedy for this could be that the pastor arrange the counseling session for resolving family tension in the parent's home.

The vast change of attitudes toward marriage between the older and younger generation of Taiwan have increased the complicated problem of the generational gap. It results in the need for such efforts in premarital counseling to resolve family tension is significantly high. During this transitional stage in our society there are several issues which may cause a degree of tension between the generations. However, there are only three crucial issues to be discussed briefly as follows. In the discussion the emphasis is on the author's position on these issues.

(1) The Issue Of Premarital Pregnancy: Pregnancy of a prospective bride may result in early marriage and alienation from their families. Many Chinese parents regard such a marriage as rebelling against the family. They feel

shamed about what has happened and usually a loosening of emotional ties between them is the result.

In Taiwan a minister may have the right to refuse to marry a couple in a church if they are unwed parents. As a result of the minister's refusal, the young couple will never return to the church. A feeling of guilt always covers the couple and their family. This certainly will not help the couple to step forward into a wholesome and happy marriage. The resentment of the parents toward the couple may not be overcome.

The author's attitude is that the unwed parents can still be permitted a wedding ceremony in the church. However, when the minister knows the prospective bride is pregnant, it is important to do several things during the pre-wedding sessions.

First of all, the pastor should help the couple face their situation realistically. The pastor encourages them to explore whatever feelings they have about their own situation--anxiety, blame, guilt, etc. The pastor should check to see if they are being pressured to marry--by one of them or by well-meaning but misguided parents.²² This is very crucial and must be faced realistically. If their evaluation leads them to conclude that they really are not

²²Clinebell, Growth Counseling, p. 55.

ready for marriage, they should consider other alternatives such as to be referred to the Home For Unwed Mothers in Hwa Len in eastern Taiwan.

A most important principle concerning this issue is that no matter what expectations the couple have, the pastor "surprises them with acceptance and affirmation!"²³ Clinebell's thought is:²⁴

The affirming human potentials approach to premarriage work is never more salutary or important than when it used with couples (unwed parents) who feel self-criticism and guilt, or expect rejection by the minister.

If the minister deals with this issue properly, the tension with the family might possibly be turned to support. More significant is the couple experiencing the forgiveness of God and the acceptance and caring of their parents and the pastor. From this the couple obtains a new strength and hope to start their new lives.

(2) The Issue Of Family Planning: Another issue which cause family tension in Taiwan is the differing views in regard to family planning. In the Chinese family it may still be that the older generation (particularly the husband's parents and grandparents) will urge the newly married couple to have children as soon as possible. The older generation is against birth control. They say the larger the

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

number of children, the greater the blessing from Heaven.

In such a situation, the pastor has an obligation to educate the young couple and also to re-educate the old parents. During premarital counseling, the minister should make it clear to both groups that procreation is only one of the purposes but not the only greatest main purpose of marriage. Every child has the right to be wanted, loved, and amply provided with the physical and spiritual necessities of life. Family planning should be advocated in order that every couple will feel responsible for every child they bring into the world.

Besides the basic principle of "responsible parenthood," there are at least four practical considerations for encouraging family planning. These must also be presented clearly to both the couple and their parents. They are:²⁵

- (1) For the purpose of marital adjustment.
- (2) For the purpose of spacing children.
- (3) For health or economic reasons.
- (4) For those whose families have reached maximum size.

Furthermore, for the population density of Taiwan is the second highest (414 persons per square kilometer) of any nation state in the world. Bangladesh now has the

²⁵Granger Westberg, Premarital Counseling (New York: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A., 1958), pp. 32-33.

highest population density (521 persons per square kilometer).²⁶ While most Chinese want children, limiting the number of children is the strong suggestion of the author. The author regards that to limit the Chinese family to two children is a realistic idea.

Related to the decision as to the number of children in a family is the consideration of what kind of birth control methods can be best used by the couple. The author urges a pastor, who is not expert in this area, to refer the couple to a medical doctor.

(3) The Issue Of Couple's Residence: Traditionally, Chinese children tend to be more dependent on their parents than American children who are expected to be more independent. This seems to be a cultural phenomena that Chinese children are close to and dependent upon their family and do not want to leave home. Most children are quite satisfied to stay close to the family. The close family relationship is the basis of personal security. For the young adults the attachment to parents has continued even after marriage.

Today, young adults have new expectations and

²⁶Both Hong-Kong and Singapore have higher densities, but both are city states rather than nation states. Based on data compiled from The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1977 (New York: Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc., 1977), pp. 1050-1055.

attitudes toward their marriage. They see being free and independent from the parents as very important in marriage. The survey of this study has shown that more and more young people do not want to live with their parents after they get married. Generally speaking, in the present situation, young adults are encouraged to set up their own nuclear family. In dealing with the "distinctness of the new family from the old family," the author agrees with Granger Westberg's opinion. He actively encourages the minister to advocate that the couple retain their parents as "their dearest friends, but friends whom they go to visit, not friends who come into their home to take over the running of it."²⁷

Usually, the nuclear family is easier to set up in terms of the simplicity of personal interactions. However, the transition from the traditional concept to the modern one is complicated in Taiwan. The author considers that a few words are needed about this issue partly because of the controversy which has surrounded the place of the nuclear family in several Western societies.

First, the author acknowledges that in Taiwan the new couple should seek to set up an independent life together. But the author also recognizes that one important means of accomplishing a creative nuclear family is to have the

²⁷Granger Westberg, p. 12.

contact and support of their original families. As Duvall points out the married couple would be a new family in its own right while belonging also to the two families.²⁸ For Chinese the inner-intimacy with the enlarged family has its cultural significance. It should not be neglected. Today, the extended family in Taiwan has diminished in importance, yet the kin relationships for Chinese are never absent.

Therefore, it may be wise for a young couple to live separately from their relatives, the abiding fellowship between them must continue. The couple and their children should return to the parent's home regularly as possible. It is a good way to decrease the emotional distance between generations. For Chinese, it is very significant to have family reunions in both parents' home on special holidays and traditional festivals (e.g., on the ancestral memorial day). This practice provides continuity, cohesiveness, and stability for the family.

For these concerns, it is suggested that a premarital counseling session include dealing with the couple and their significant persons from the two families. The aim here is not only to resolve family tension but also to facilitate meaningful communication and contact between the two groups and build up good relationships with the in-laws.

²⁸Evelyn M. Duvall, Being Married (New York: Association Press, 1960), p. 209.

5. Developing Patterns For Religious Sharing:

What makes a marriage Christian does not arise from the Christian wedding and the sacred words used in the ceremony. To establish a Christian marriage demands great effort by both husband and wife in their daily married life. However, premarital counseling is the best chance for a minister and the couple to focus their minds in thinking about Christian marriage realistically and practically. Thus, another goal of premarital counseling is to help the couple to relate to each other's Christian faith. In regard to this goal, Kenneth Mitchell states:²⁹

Pastoral premarital counseling is to extend all of the resources of the Gospel and of the church to a couple at a critical period in their lives, in order that these resources may be understood as available and meaningful to them in their continuing life together.

The couple needs the minister's nurture in order to move toward a spiritually mature relationship. Since the minister is a representative of the Christian faith, he/she is interested in the spiritual development of the couple. The minister has a great responsibility to work for the establishment of homes which will develop well-adjusted individuals who are capable of becoming happy Christians

²⁹Kenneth R. Mitcheel, "Reinterpreting The Purpose of Premarital Counseling," Pastoral Psychology, XVIII: 24 (October 1967), 18.

throughout their lives, enjoying wholesome relationships with others. The minister is considered to have a unique role in premarital counseling by aiding the couple to find a meaningful relationship in the Christian community with each other and with God.

Concerning the function of education, C. H. Patterson, a psychologist, regards the purpose of education is to actualize the good and to minimize the evil in one's potential. He says, "Indeed in all human societies, education is a necessary means to helping one actualize oneself fully."

³⁰ Put theologically Christian education is to help people to know what it means to be children of God and to live in the image of God. In the words of the Apostle Paul the task of education is to learn to fulfill the glory of God.³¹ Since one of the tasks of premarital counseling is education, it has this type of function in educating the couple.

The deepest level of communication in a Christian marriage is the existential or religious level of communication. Here the couple is concerned with their ability to communicate as to how they meet their basic religious needs --the need to love and to be loved and the need to feel worthwhile as children of God. Therefore, beginning in the

³⁰C. H. Patterson, Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 12.

³¹A free interpretation of Romans 3: 21-26.

premarital counseling, the couple need assistance in sharing their religious experiences with each other and also in learning to touch each other's life in the presence of God.

For this concern the minister is not trying to enlist the couple in any particular institution's approach to religion, but to assist them in understanding the deep need for sharing primary religious experiences.³² In other words, rather than merely asking a couple about which church they will attend after marriage, the pastor may ask for a brief religious history of the couple's experiences in order to determine the depth and extent of their religious sharing.

6. Deepening The Pastoral Relationship:

The key word for counseling the prospective couple is relationship. The relationship does not die with the termination of the counseling. From the point of view of pastoral care, it is imperative that the pastor establish a lasting relationship with the couple. The young couple need a family pastor as they need a family doctor.³³

Thus, another important goal of current pastoral premarital counseling is the building of an in-depth

³²Oates and Rewatt, p. 70.

³³Ibid., p. 20.

relationship between the pastor and the couple. Clinebell makes this goal clear in stating that the "master goal" of premarital counseling is the "establishment of a robust relationship with the couple."³⁴ Again, in Clinebell's recent book Growth Counseling for Marriage Enrichment, he emphasizes that "Building or strengthening the minister-couple relationship is the most important single goal."³⁵

To deepen the pastoral relationship with the couple through premarital counseling is rewarding from a pastoral care standpoint. The real value of such interviews is to set the stage for later counseling if and when problems of some magnitude arise. The minister should feel a genuine concern for the couple and their future relationship and let this concern be expressed. The minister must communicate his/her concern clearly so that the couple feels that the minister is available when future problems arise.

Ideally, it is better if the minister's spouse joins in at least one of the premarital conversations. In the author's own experience, a Chinese woman will be more comfortable when the minister's wife is present. This lays an excellent foundation for future contacts giving the couple less hesitation in coming to the minister or his/her

³⁴Clinebell, Basic Types, p. 202.

³⁵Clinebell, Growth Counseling, p. 53.

spouse with a problem. For this concern the author expects to develop programs to work with pastors' wives and also with pastors and wives as couples as preparation for their effective roles in premarital counseling.

7. Encouraging Post-Wedding Counseling:

Realistically, no matter how cautious a couple is, they will not be able to avoid the problems that will arise after marriage. Most frequently problems arise soon after a marriage. No wonder both Clinebell and Oates strongly suggest that counseling can and should be done through the first year after marriage. Since a strong emphasis concerns growth experiences of the newlyweds, another major goal of premarital counseling is the setting up of one or more post-wedding sessions.

Follow-up appointment(s) with a couple after a wedding or honeymoon constitutes postmarital counseling. These should be considered as routine and as natural as premarital interviews. It is the pastor's responsibility to have that concept understood by the couple before they are married.

Possibly, a pastor would invite the newlyweds to meet the pastor after three months, six months, and a year. The stated purpose would be to chat about how things are going as they experience pressures and new joys during the first year of their marriage. In these routine postwedding

sessions where no major problems have crystallized, the pastor may focus on examining the communication between the couple. This will emphasize their feelings, their sense of companionship, mutual consideration, tenderness, affection, and sexual adjustment.³⁶

Oates describes this "Post-Cana " type of postwedding counseling as being done very creatively in a pastor's group for newlyweds.³⁷ The author expects that when the premarital counseling program is widely and effectively practiced in Taiwanese churches, Chinese newlyweds will participate enthusiastically in this type of group counseling.

8. Studying The Christian Wedding Ceremony:

A final goal and area of discussion with the couple is to work on arrangements for the procedural details of the wedding ceremony itself. This is always the most interesting and exciting part to the couple. Usually they would like to spend much time in discussion and preparing for the wedding.

A Christian wedding is not a fashion show, but a sacred and solemn worship. For Christians a wedding opens

³⁶Russell L. Dicks, Premarital Guidance (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 134.

³⁷Oates and Rewatt, p. 17.

the door to holy matrimony helping spiritual growth become real and ongoing. Therefore, the minister must realize that he/she is not just a wedding performer but a teacher or an interpreter of the meaning of a Christian wedding. The pastor should enthusiastically help the couple to understand and plan the wedding ceremony so that the experience will be for them a celebration of the "new reality they are creating--their relationship."³⁸

The fact that a couple begins married life with a religious ceremony shows their desire to have the blessing of God and the church on their lives and divine help in building a Christian home. Thus, to interpret the essence of a Christian wedding and to communicate a pastoral blessing upon the couple's union should be one of the major focuses in premarital counseling. By doing this the minister can aid the couple in understanding the significance and place of the wedding ceremony in their marriage. By doing that the wedding ceremony is not only a celebration but also a blessing to the couple.³⁹

³⁸Clinebell, Growth Counseling, p. 53.

³⁹Oates and Rewatt, p. 37.

B. THE CONTEXT OF THE PROGRAM

According to Seward Hiltner and Lowell Colston, the context of pastoral counseling involves at least four dimensions. In their report of pastoral research entitled The Context of Pastoral Counseling, they list the Setting, Expectations, Relationship, and Counselor's Aims and Limitations as the four focal points of pastoral context. In another research paper by Wade Rewatt which is entitled "Changing Context of A Selected Pastoral Counseling Center," he explores a fifth dimension of the context--interpersonal counselee relationships. Based on the above concept the author attempts to divide the context of premarital counseling in these five dimensions as follows.

1. The Setting:

The setting of premarital counseling denotes the physical surroundings in which the counseling takes place. Traditionally, the setting for pastoral interviews has been in the pastor's study. Some Chinese pastors might not have a comfortable pastor's study. The church should provide a suitable room in order that the pastor and the couple can meet in a satisfactory place for premarital counseling.

In commenting on the various ways of conducting the premarital counseling program, Westberg states, "While most pastoral counseling is done in the pastor's study in the

church, premarital counseling is a bit different and can be done more effectively in the manse or parsonage."⁴⁰ Illustrating how maximum benefits may be derived from the manse situation, Westberg explains:⁴¹

Often the minister's wife joins in the discussion toward the end of the evening Couples never forget such an evening spent in the pastor's home and they feel that they have a personal excellent foundation for the future contact so that the couple will have less hesitation in coming to the minister or his wife with a problem later on.

Furthermore, due to the emphasis on informality and lack of an authoritarian structure in the young generation, the author considers a more effective setting for premarital counseling could be the home or apartment of one of the couple. Another excellent way considering the setting is a retreat for a number of engaged couples at an assembly grounds on a weekend or on holidays.

2. The Expectation:

The couple's conception of what will happen in the counseling sessions is the second dimension of the context.

A couple may come to a minister with these assumptions: "We have finally made up our mind. We have settled on each other and we want to get married. We no longer have

⁴⁰Westberg, p. 9.

⁴¹Ibid.

problems. We just want to have a wedding rehearsal with you." Whereas a minister who takes premarital counseling seriously should have his/her assumption: "A couple being seen by me has certain kinds of needs of which they probably are not aware."

Perhaps the most fruitful and significant result in preparation for marriage is a careful examination of what the couple expects in contrast to what can be realistically expected from the premarital counseling. Thus, a responsible pastor in the course of premarital counseling is to identify areas of "unpreparedness" and then proceed in assisting the couple to gain the help they need. The details concerning this matter have been discussed in the earlier section of this chapter.

3. The Relationship:

The relationship, that is, the level and direction of interaction between a pastor and a couple, is a third component of the context. It is important that premarital counseling be based on a firm relationship between the counselor and the couple. That relationship may be characterized by caring, loving, and accepting. In Carroll Wise's words, "... it is deepened and intensified relationship."⁴²

⁴²Carroll A. Wise, Pastoral Counseling (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), p. 44.

The firm relationship in premarital counseling is ideally realized when the couple has had a long-term relationship with the pastor. However, the mobility of our society could create more possibilities for ministers marrying persons with whom they have limited relationships. In this situation, the emphasis is upon open communication on the part of the pastor with the couple while developing a quality rather than a quantity of relationship. This need for openness and sincerity demands a high degree of self awareness on the part of the pastors. Stewart is careful to note that "Rapport needs first to be established (in such a case) so that the couple feel they can trust you as their minister with certain highly personal information."⁴³

Apparently, the traditional pattern of communication (having the couple "listen to the pastor") is no longer applicable to young people for establishing such a firm relationship. An approach to premarital counseling with young adults, at its best, should be a relationship-centered approach. It is expected that the pastor change the model of communication from authority-centered to relationship-centered.

In addition to the change of communication model there are other components, such as sensitivity and confidentiality which may influence the counseling relationship.

⁴³Stewart, p. 79.

The minister's sensitivity towards others and a concern for others is important in achieving an atmosphere of approachability for counseling. The matter of approachability is particularly important where young people are coming for premarital counseling.

Finally, another factor which has close connection with the counseling relationship is that, what is told during the premarital counseling must be kept in confidence. The matter of confidentiality in premarital counseling as in other types of counseling is of primary concern to people even if unspoken. The help given as a pastoral counselor would not be worth anything if one could not keep confidentiality. The Chinese minister must be aware of the matter of confidentiality. It is particularly important to the Chinese people who have been deeply affected by traditional thinking. As the typical saying indicates, "Keep your mouth shut to keep your family name good."

4. The Aim And Limitation:

The aim and limitation of the pastor is a fourth dynamic of the context of premarital counseling. In premarital counseling it is most significant that the pastor clearly focus the aims or goals of the program. These have been discussed previously in this chapter. It is also very significant that the pastor be realistic about limitations in doing premarital counseling. It is suggested that the

pastor conducting on-going premarital counseling programs would be wise to seek a consultant (such as a psychiatrist or a well-trained counselor) who would help insure that the pastor's limitations do not interfere with the couple's growth.⁴⁴

The minister's role does not place him/her in a position to give all the information the couple needs. For the premarital counseling program has its profound goals and complicated contents, the minister may have difficulty in handling all of the task alone. Therefore, the pastor needs to be skilled as an organizer in bringing together the resources of the community in such a way that the responsibility for the effective premarital counseling program can be shared by them. The pastor is obligated to the couple to recommend medical counsel and, if necessary, to aid them in securing psychiatric care. It is important that the pastor refer such couples to qualified professionals who are trustworthy and will work closely with the pastor.

5. The Interpersonal Couple Relationship :

The fifth contextual factor is the level of the couple's previous or present interaction. This is an important factor in the dynamics in premarital counseling.

⁴⁴Oates and Rewatt, p. 77.

In premarital counseling, a pastor's ability to assist couples will soon be communicated from one couple to another. Couples often learn from their friends and colleagues how the pastor was significant during their preparation for marriage. Consequently, the couple will have a high degree of hope and trust based on the kind of experiences previous couples had with the pastor. Naturally, one couple after another will become messengers of goodwill to other couples who will seek the pastor's premarital counseling.⁴⁵

For Chinese people the reputation of the pastor which they have learned through the reports of their interpersonal relationships with other married couples is particularly significant. This increases the respect given a capable pastor.

C. THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The structure of the premarital counseling sessions depends upon the pastor's own interest and ability. It also depends upon the willingness of the counselees to relate to the minister providing the counseling. In the following section, two types of premarital counseling programs will be outlined. One is for a single couple, and the other for a group of couples.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 79.

1. With An Individual Couple:

Most of the principle and practice of premarital counseling have been discussed in previous sections. Here the author wants to apply those principles and practices to set up an example of a premarital counseling schedule for an individual couple. In planning such a premarital counseling schedule the following questions must be considered in accord with the needs of the Chinese couples. These are:

- (1) How many weekly sessions will be called?
(6 sessions)
- (2) How long will each session be?
(1.5 to 2 hours)
- (3) What persons will be in each session?
(the couple, the pastor, the couple's parents, the pastor's spouse, etc.)
- (4) Where they will meet?
(the pastor's office, the pastor's home, the couple's home, etc.)
- (5) What will be the subject for each session?
(the subject for each session is based on the goal or the focus of the premarital counseling program)
- (6) What materials can be used?
(personality test, the questionnaire used in this study, the Bible, prayer book, etc.)

The example of a schedule for premarital counseling with a Chinese individual couple could be as follows: (See page 217.)

The Schedule For Premarital Counseling
With An Individual Couple:

	Subject	Time	Place	Person	Material
1st	Assessing The Readiness For Marriage	2 Hours	Pastor's Office	Pastor Couple	Personality Test
2nd	Enhancing The Interpersonal Relationship	2 Hours	Pastor's Office	Pastor Couple	The Questionnaire
3rd	Discussing Basic Marital Information	2 Hours	Pastor's Home	Pastor Spouse Couple	Books and Pamphlets
4th	Resolving Family Tensions	2 Hours	Couple's Home	Pastor Couple Parents	Books and Pamphlets
5th	Developing Patterns For Religious Sharing	2 Hours	Pastor's Office	Pastor Couple	The Bible
6th	Studying The Christian Wedding Ceremony; Wedding Rehearsal	2 Hours	Chapel	The Wedding Party	Prayer Book

2. With A Group Of Couples:

(1) Why Premarital Group Counseling? The second type of structure for conducting premarital counseling is to use a small group of several couples. There are many good reasons for working with groups.

One of the more obvious is the time factor. Premarital group counseling would have a time-saving advantage. This would be particularly true for pastors who are involved in young congregations and those involved in special ministries such as personal counseling in a counseling center, college chaplain, or director of student ministry. These pastors would probably find the group structure more receptive to individuals as well as a more productive use of their time. Group counseling will be necessary in Taiwan in as much as there is a shortage of pastoral counselors.

Another and more significant reason is that premarital group counseling can be highly effective. From the world of psychotherapy and also from the experiences of the Christian life, the idea seems to be emerging that people can grow and be healed in group encounter.⁴⁶ Similarly, the pastor will find that many problems of preparation for marriage and premarital pastoral care and counseling can be

⁴⁶Richard B. Wilke, The Pastor and Marriage Group Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), p. 36.

dealt with in a small group of young couples planning to be married.

A number of significant things can happen within the premarital group. The educative input of premarital counseling may work best through small group modes in which the couples are able to fully discuss new ideas and their implications. Specific input from the individual couples comprising the group can enrich the discussion of each chosen topic. Group members not only present their own problem, thinkings, and feelings about themselves, but respond to what others say about themselves. Through such sharing and responding a person learns by indirect living in other's experiences. It enables persons to grow individually and contributes to the growth of others.

The merits of growth-oriented groups are profound, especially for premarital counseling. Clinebell remarks:⁴⁷

When they meet in a group setting, an intimate sharing of feelings, ideas, and experiences in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding enhances self-respect, deepens self-understanding, and helps a person live with others. These very things are the most important elements they need to learn in their marital lives.

The effectiveness of premarital group counseling in Rutledge's words are:⁴⁸

⁴⁷Clinebell, Basic Types, p. 206.

⁴⁸Rutledge, p. 99.

It takes advantage of the natural heterosexual grouping of two people, moves it from relative isolation into a group of couples, which is a prototype of the larger community, where educative, reeducative, and corrective means of developing relationship competence can be brought to their assistance.

Carl Rogers' idea is that dealing directly with young people who are considering partnership in groups permits them to be open. This is one important way of building for more lasting and creative relationships.⁴⁹ James Peterson briefly described what he calls group premarital counseling, and refers to it as "one of the promising movements to aid young couples to prepare more adequately for marriage."⁵⁰ Peterson also says:⁵¹

One of the main values of the group experience is the reduction of fears, guilt, and conflict as well as helping individuals to set somewhat more adequate goals for marriage.

Apparently, the time has come when premarital counseling skills need to be adapted to a group structure. However, there is as yet little evidence that the churches are aware of such a tremendous medium in their programs of preparing the youth for marriage. Even the churches that utilize the group approach have scratched only the surface of

⁴⁹Rogers, p. 218.

⁵⁰James A. Peterson, Education For Marriage (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 221.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 222.

the rich possibilities in this direction.⁵²

The author anticipates that the mastery of the group approach in premarital counseling needs soon to become an important task for Chinese pastoral counselors who expect fruitful result.

(2) Some Practical Guidelines: Basic principles for educative group counseling such as premarital group counseling need to be clarified. The following are some practical guidelines for conducting premarital group counseling.⁵³

(A) A few factors seem to be involved in attracting people to a group. These are:

- (a) The design of the group is to meet the felt needs of a particular group of couples.
- (b) A nonthreatening label and soft-sell publicity are used.
- (c) A personal invitation is extended by the minister or lay leader to encourage couples to participate. and
- (d) The group's purpose and contract are stated clearly in advance and repeated at the first meeting.

⁵²Clinebell, Basic Types, p. 206.

⁵³These guidelines are basically derived from Clinebell's principles of educative group counseling. Ibid., pp. 218-220.

(B) In working with a group of engaged couples the pastor should not measure his/her effectiveness by the size of the group but by the quality of their motives for belonging to the group. As a matter of fact, an effective educative counseling group must be small enough to permit frequent participation by all its members. A premarital group consisting of four to six couples is an ideal size. The maximum number really ought not be more than eight couples.

(C) The management of the group itself is important. The author prefers to agree upon schedules with the group itself. However, as Oates says, "I do not like to have less than three meetings of 60 to 90 minutes each with a group, and rarely can they or I have more than fifteen meetings."⁵⁴ It would be good to have five to seven weekly sessions of about two hours each.

(D) The author prefers conducting premarital counseling on a group basis. However, it would be more productive if the pastor could work intensively with individual couples before attempting group work. This is because the pastor becomes more secure personally as he/she deals with couples on an individual basis. It helps the pastor to know more about the particular kinds of problems the couple will present in conference.

⁵⁴Oates and Rewatt, pp. 63-64.

An alternative way is for the group to plan for at least one private conference between each individual couple and their pastor in addition to the group sessions. The basic principle for this concern is that the pastor should be aware of each individual couple as well as of the group as a whole.

(E) Since a pastor may be limited in knowledge and experience in some particular areas, the minister might better work with other professionals. Churches following such a plan may have resource persons for each of the sessions, such as a physician, a psychiatrist, a professional counselor, other ministers, etc. Clinebell suggests that it is also helpful to include a couple married less than five years as catalysts in a premarriage group. Clinebell says, "Engaged couples usually find it helpful to interact with a married couple who are discovering new strengths as they are coping with problems."⁵⁵

(F) In terms of the setting, the premarital group counseling can be held in the church, the parsonage, or in the home of a recently married couple. When the group meets in the home of a married couple, the couple can serve as host and as coordinators or catalysts. It may also provide a very favorable atmosphere for personal and interpersonal

⁵⁵Clinebell, Growth Counseling, pp. 51 & 60.

growth.

(G) The initial presentation in a session should be brief and immediately relevant to the felt needs of the group. At the outset the leader should ask each member to say what he/she hopes to get from the group experience. This gives the pastor a tentative impression of the group's need and learning readiness.

(H) Marriage is a cooperative enterprise between a man and a woman. The couple are going to live together. The pastor is wise to deal with the couples as couples together rather than to have "for men only" and "for women only" approaches. To attempt to prepare them in isolation from the other sex is neither biblical nor wise from the point of view of the nature of group relationships. Premarital counseling groups would be like the growth group described by Clinebell:⁵⁶

Their prime purpose would be the growth of the members emotionally, interpersonally, intellectually, and spiritually.... Change in both attitudes and feelings and in behavior in interpersonal relationship is the goal.

(I) It is essential in a premarital counseling group to include communication exercises in which the couples can participate. Clinebell emphasizes that the focus

⁵⁶Clinebell, The People Dynamics (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 3.

of a preparation-for-marriage group will be on deepening communication, discovering the strengths in the couple's relationship, and using these to develop the kind of mutually-satisfying marriage they both want.⁵⁷ Furthermore, a pastoral-care orientation of a premarital group should include the exercise of how to communicate important matters in a spiritually secure atmosphere.

For these purposes, a resource book, a topic, or a flexible outline of how the various sessions may be used will reduce group anxiety and assist communication exercise as well. A wide variety of the basic marriage information listed in previous section can be used as topics for discussions. Some contents in the books Meet Me In The Middle by Charlotte Clinebell and Family Problems by Wallace Denton, are excellent resources for group discussions.

(J) Rogers has seen in his experience, when a group has a competent leader the opportunity of premarital groups is very great. There are some basic principles for a successful group leader. Rogers says:⁵⁸

Given a nonjudgemental and facilitative person as organizer of such a group, young people can openly explore their differing expectations of each other and of the partnership, and their mutually interdependent support--each for the other.

⁵⁷Clinebell, Growth Counseling, p. 49.

⁵⁸Rogers, p. 217.

It is here the first principle of nonjudgemental and facilitative leadership is indicated. Hence an effective premarital group is geared to growth-orientation. The growth-enabling leadership is best described as "maieutic" leadership, from the Greek maieuomu (to serve as midwife). Its function is to assist the natural process by which human beings experience the birth of self-other awareness and grow in their ability to cope constructively with their own life situation.⁵⁹ The other growth-leadership functions are as follows:⁶⁰

- (a) The leader functions in the "group-centered" manner as he/she attempts to create a warm, accepting climate.
- (b) The leader maintains awareness of both the individual and the group organism.
- (c) The leader listens carefully to what each member says and reflects both content and feeling.
- (d) The leader builds group-centeredness by linking what various people say, he/she points to the connections or contrasts in their oppositions, and by avoiding the authority-centered role, he/she puts the responsibility where it belongs--on the group.
- (e) The leader helps individuals who need further support or involvement.

⁵⁹Clinebell, The People Dynamics, p. 41.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 37-41.

- (f) The leader encourages openness of communication. He/she offers tools for enhancing communication and practicing deeper relating.

CONCLUSION

A. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY--SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study is the product of research and the actual experience of the author. A major limitation of the study is that it relates to a new field with an undeveloped body of literature in Taiwan relating directly to the main subject of the study. Hence, the study is limited by subjectivity. It depends greatly upon the author's own experience and the American literature.

The author is most concerned about reaching a basic theory program for practicing pastoral premarital counseling, which is applicable to the Chinese people. The specific contents and approaches discussed in this study are considered most functional and suitable to the situation in Taiwan. However, in the absence of specialists among Chinese ministers, the clinical effectiveness of these contents and approaches is yet to be substantiated empirically. This may be considered as another limitation of the study and also an area for further experimental research. Hopefully, a more effective indigenous methodology of premarital counseling will result from such further study and clinical experience.

This study has been exploratory, evaluative, and

descriptive research. It has provided an amount of data in which young people's changing attitudes toward marriage has been explored. Ministers, educators, and counselors should note that the study presents some findings for understanding the recent changes in marriage which should be helpful in their respective professions. However, there are some questions about the marriage attitudes expressed among the sample. Are the young people revealing only surface adaptation to modernization and Westernization, yet holding to traditional patterns under modern clothing? Or, have their basic attitudes, patterns of living and value systems really been changed?

In other words, two possibilities exist in regard to the findings since this research has been limited to young adult Christians. First, the new marriage pattern may be an expectation only of those single adults and young married adults. Or, another possibility is that this new marriage pattern is only recently emerging but will persist throughout the marital life span of this sample. These questions bring forth the necessity for further studies. Therefore, longitudinal research and research utilizing a broader age range is suggested.

Furthermore, since only 145 young adult Christians were sampled for this study, only a small segment of the church is represented. It is suggested that this study or a similar one be conducted to include young Christians of

other denominations with as large a sample population as possible. It is also suggested that this kind of study be repeated periodically, possibly once every five years, in order to update the informations about this subject.

B. CLOSING WORDS

The changes taking place in the life of Chinese in relationships to marriage and the family are both inevitable and desirable. Today Chinese people are caught between the tradition and the new society. People live in confusion because new responses and adaptations are needed. Since pastoral care cannot remain unchanged in a changing society, the challenge is for pastors to become concerned about the new needs of people. This challenge for Chinese pastors is obvious and greater than ever before. This study is an effort of the author to respond to the challenge. Although this is only a preliminary study on pastoral premarital counseling, it points out some directions in which current youth culture and youth ministry may be moving and focusing in Taiwan. Such directions enable further studies and more effective action programs by various institutions, including the church.

In general, people in the field of pastoral counseling assume that premarital counseling is effective in promoting creative marriages. However, their assumptions are mainly based on subjective observation and evaluation. In

fact, there have been few actual reports of the effectiveness of premarital counseling. There is still a need for objective research to realistically evaluate the effectiveness of premarital counseling. Nevertheless, pastoral premarital counseling, whether it takes the form of sessions with individual couple or with a group of couples, has many values for a Christian ministry in modern Taiwan. The study has presented substantial evidence to indicate that premarital counseling plays an essential part in the Christian ministry as it relates to the needs of individuals facing marriage and of families in a changing society. It is noted that the Christian ministry in Taiwan can be greatly enhanced by rendering premarital counseling to the young people. Premarital counseling contributes to a creative marriage and also to the stability of the Christian community and of the society.

Although the majority of young couples in Taiwan have not been counseled before marriage, the need for such counseling clearly exists. For most pastors today, establishing the Chinese minister's identity as a premarital counselor is an unsolved problem. This study is addressed to Chinese ministers to bring a strong emphasis upon encouraging them to meet with young couples prior to their marriage. The study is calling ministers to an awareness that premarital counseling is now a matter they can neither ignore nor escape. Therefore, it is time to turn their

attention to this new frontier issue of pastoral concern.

It is hoped that this study will encourage both reflection and further research by those who are in the position of working directly with young people. The author is encouraged and excited in thinking that this study may be a further step on the long journey of promoting premarital counseling programs in Taiwan. The author believes that if more ministers will join with the author in the struggle of providing patterns for creative Christian marriage and for effective premarital counseling, the total Christian ministry will thereby be vastly benefited.

APPENDIX

.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

I am conducting a study on current attitudes concerning the factors which may or may not be necessary for a creative marriage relationship among Chinese young adult Christians. Your kind assistance in answering the questionnaire would provide new and significant knowledge in this area. All responses will be strictly confidential, the questionnaire should not be signed and only statistically reported in the findings of this study.

Thank You Very Much For Your Cooperation

Part I: (Direction) Please place an (X) before the appropriate response to each of the following items.

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age: ☐ 20-22 ☐ 23-26 ☐ 27-30

Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married

Education: ☐ College Student ☐ College Graduate

Part II: (Direction) Using the scale below, please place rank each factor as to its degree of necessity for a creative marriage relationship. A "creative marriage" is briefly defined as a happy, rewarding, satisfying, and successful experience which married people eagerly seek. A creative marriage needs not be problem free. Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

Degree Of Necessity

1 Very Necessary 2 Highly Necessary

3 Fairly Necessary 4 Fairly Unnecessary

5 Not Very Necessary 6 Very Unnecessary

<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Security	<input type="checkbox"/> Sense of Humor
<input type="checkbox"/> Handsomeness or Beauty	<input type="checkbox"/> Good Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Good Character	<input type="checkbox"/> Similar Social Class
<input type="checkbox"/> Similar Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Similar Religion
<input type="checkbox"/> Participating in A Church	<input type="checkbox"/> Congenial Parent-Child Relationship
<input type="checkbox"/> To Have Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Live with Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> Choose Your Own Mate	<input type="checkbox"/> Premarital Chastity
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Compatibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Loyalty
<input type="checkbox"/> Love for Each Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Trust for Each Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Individuality	<input type="checkbox"/> Equality
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation: (appropriate sharing of responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/> Open Communication (free expression and discussion)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mutual Interests	<input type="checkbox"/> Mutual understanding
<input type="checkbox"/> Mutual Adjustment	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Part III: Please place an (X) before the appropriate Item.

Do you think that premarital counseling is very important?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

For Married: Did you have counseling before your marriage?

☐ Yes ☐ No

For Single: Do you hope to have counseling before marriage?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

If you anticipate premarital counseling, from whom or from which agency do you expect to have counseling?

☐ Pastor ☐ Missionary ☐ Counseling Center

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